The Three Dimensions of Time

Excerpts from the writings of

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The Three Dimensions of Time

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Naturally everything depends on your particular level of being. I want to explain that because I use that word 'Being' certain ways when we talk about a human being. I've talked many times about different levels of unconsciousness. All of that for me is a level of being. It is written with a small 'b'. I'm sorry that in speaking about a being, I cannot say 'now this is with a small 'b' and what I really mean is with a capital 'B'. Maybe I could have said that last Thursday in order to avoid confusion. Being with a capital 'B' belongs to a person who starts to Wake up and has a little bit of Consciousness. It is when one grows up, that is, progresses in development and it is comparable to that what is an unconscious state crossing the line which separates that state from a Conscious one. The closer you come to that line - that horizontal line that we talk about in the Three Body Diagram - the higher your level of being is, but it is still being with a small 'b' because it is still unconscious.

But the closer you come to that line, the more potentiality becomes uncovered. And it is the uncovering of the potentiality - it is not as yet an actuality, it has not gone over the line and crystallizing out into something else. But the uncovering of the potentiality is already a big step. It means that you are open to a possibility without knowing what to do about it. It is what I call always Man Number Four. In that particular state of his being, between the Do Re Mi of that little bit of octave of the Kesdjanian Body, the being level is constantly going up, still staying within the being as a small b. But at the same time, during that process, his potentialities become more and more clear. And there is the potentiality even of a wish. Even if it is not as yet completely changed over into the reality of a wish, one lives in anticipation or in hope of a possibility that someday, somehow or other, some time certain things can take place. They do take place when you come to the Fa bridge of that particular octave. And on that particular, in that process, during walking on the bridge, the potentiality becomes actual. But also, across the bridge and in the so-called country of Consciousness, there are different levels of Being, this time Being is written with a capital 'B'. But closer to the line it is not as much developed.

We talk every once in awhile about one percent, two percent, up to a hundred. Even simultaneously with that, the whole question of Simultaneity is not always understood at what time it actually can take place. Also that what one does regarding certain traits. They change and perhaps become permanent in undoing a habit. But it does not mean that the totality of a personality is changing. And even

if, at a certain time, a personality may be at one moment totally hundred percent Conscious, the next moment he isn't anymore. And it goes constantly up and down regarding these potentialities going over into actual existences, and returning again to a state of, let's call it, being reduced again to a potentiality in which the wish continues to exist, and also gradually no words can be found for the wish.and then it disappears again.

What we mean by this constancy of a relationship in a triad of Do Re Mi - Mi Re Do is really an indication of a sinus curve. I travel on that all the time. Where I start is a minimum. Where I come to the greatest height is an optimum. Where I come to the end, where it reaches again the axis, is a maximum. All of that is a vibration rate. An octave is a vibration rate. Progress is always in accordance with a vibration rate which vibrates. And the differences between the levels of being above the line or below all depend on the quantity of vibrations that can take place in a second. This is the language we use below the line: how many rates of vibration can be taken in a second or in a certain time length. When it is above the line the rates of vibration are measured by how many can take place in a Moment. And it becomes very interesting to see that the difference in measuring that what one is, is not anymore in accordance with anything that has to do with a time length, but it has to do with an elimination of time and a realization of the existence of time in the form of an expansion, not a time length as duration.

It also reminds me - I said something about dimensionality, the question of Magnetic Center, where it stops and becomes non-dimensional. I said something about space, that it is three-fold, as it were, We call it an X and a Y and a Z axis co-ordinates, which determines the position of any kind of a point in relation to those three axis - if you are familiar with mathematics or geometry. But what we simply in ordinary life call an ordinary length and a width and a height, a cube. And that is it as far as space is concerned.

And then I said the same applies to time. And I didn't explain it well enough because I thought it was understandable. The first dimension of time is comparable, of course, with a certain length that one walks on from one place to another, in a certain period, which is time-consuming, that is, of course, a duration of time going from A to B, from one place to the other, and measuring then what takes place as if time comes toward you on that road and goes through you, and that what is the velocity of that time going through you is measured by the time it is when you reach your destination.

If you imagine that this takes place for each person and that you then compare at any one time that what takes place with everyone else, this question of a concept of time existing, not only in you but also in others, constitutes totally a

plane of time. The time which is ‘unique subjective’ for each person is consumed by each personality, but the totality of the time then as consumed is like a time extension away from the duration line and now extending in the form of a plane. That is the second dimension of time.

Now the third dimension. When you take for yourself the place where you are, and you remember your past and you anticipate a future, it is your history. I call it sometimes ‘his-story’ that what a man lives when he lives on this Earth and is subject to these ideas of time or subject to the laws as expressed by what we consider time. It is ‘historical’ time. This takes place for each person and determines for him a solidity of his own time if he could see his life totally, which sometimes can happen at the end of it when his life octave - which is a duration of course that he has lived so many years - is, I called it the other day ‘shriveled up’. It is telescoped into one point.

But the question now, considering the existence of time as concepts in different people, each one has their own history. And the history of mankind as a whole, which would on the planetary or the (plane) level for all mankind existing at any one time, would mean the history of time itself regarding the Earth. So that then total civilizations changing and disappearing and existing again, constitutes totally as a civilization and as a totality of mankind having lived their own time, the totality of all of them at any one time being a plane that what is then historically true for all of them becomes the third dimension of time.

That is really the history of the Earth as it is, sometimes extrapolated as far as the future is concerned. But at the present time consisting of a dimension of time of threefold-ness, which is a cube of time. And again there is the end of the possibility of a dimensionality of time itself because it can only go up to three, and then it must return to one, like any triad must be reduced to a point, or where it concerns time, that each time dimension as threefold-ness must be reduced to a Moment. It is necessary to understand that law, because unless it becomes one, there is no further progress. A cube can continue in the sense of time when it is moving. That is, space can move in time but that what is space, filling the totality of time as three dimensions, is again the end of a possibility for any kind of an object moving into space. And then to change over from the state in which that happens into next level will require the reduction of that what is the space three-unit and the time three-unit into two entities.

One is a point in space. The second is a point in time, which is a Moment. The point in space is a light [or life] force which is then considered. We look at that once in awhile mathematically as that what is really a force in space, and time itself existing as a vital point. That what is the growth of that force in becoming a

current, changes at that time over, not in accordance with the laws of space but becomes a time-element continuing as a current until that, in its threefold-ness, becomes timeless. Then that concept goes over into absolute. The question of Infinity can be understood in that way. But I wanted to correct perhaps what was not clear on Thursday and I hope it didn't give any particular confusion.

So now we return again to that what we really talked about. How do you get up in the morning and what do you expect of the day? What do you want to create for yourself to remind you? Even if you don't have a hairy shirt, can you make it in some way or other? Sometimes I say a towel, sometimes certain things that are different from the evening before which you have intentionally changed, and you discover the next day that you put certain things in a certain way in accordance with a law. The changing over of that what is usual into unusual is the creation of a Legominism, which early in the morning you discover. With the Legominism, discovery is associated the name of the Lord. With that you start your day because you are reminded about your Life force, your Magnetic Center, your wish to live during the day in time-duration, and at the same time eating time up by means of Work on yourself. That process, if understood, gives a coloration to the totality of your personality. The color depends on the state in which you are when you Wake up. You may sometimes go through all the colors of the rainbow and it would be quite useful to see during the day how many of the white ray possibilities, as component parts, you could go through.

But don't ever forget that whichever color you are in, it is part of the white ray and all you have to do is to turn around. First you look at the past, then you look at the future. Then you look at your feet as the present. If in a spectrum you are let's say at the color green, you must look to the left, you see red. You turn around hundred and eighty degrees, you see blue and ultraviolet. Then you realize where you are - on green. You telescope this spectrum in one and the green becomes white.

Use little symbols like that for your daily prayer. When you can get up and you can remember, you can save the day. It is like that with a day, it is like that with a birthday. It is all the time the possibility to be with oneself - not to forget overcoming obstacles, whatever the conditions may be, you use them because they are given to you for a purpose of overcoming and extracting from it, I said not so long ago 'the elixir of life'. That is the quintessence of an essential existence.

So, maybe we drink to Gurdjieff. Try to remember yourself when you drink.

If I define subjectivity for a man, I simply say he is subject to a law of time and a law of space. I have to explain that to myself what is really meant because it is really connected very much with the dependence on the five sense organs. As far as dimensionality is concerned, expressed in space, it has to do with distances. It has to do with the movement of a certain point which, when it moves, describes a line. That you might say it is one dimensional. When the line describes a plane, that is, when it moves - not necessarily perpendicular to its own length, but in any event in a different direction from the length itself - it describes a plane. And when a plane begins to move - also not in the direction of the plane itself but, you might say, perpendicular to it - it describes a cube. Therefore I describe with myself, and I know with my mind whenever there is a dimension number one, two, or three - that is a line, a plane, and a cube or a solid - that then I have reached the limitations of the space exploration by my mind. But I do it with my mind because that's the way I live subjectively and my ordinary sense organs are adjusted to that.

The second difficulty is time, because if I say - what is time for me? - I simply say I have a concept in my mind as to the future, and I believe that also the future and the present and the past is like a line, but a line which hits me when I experience time. When I live and I look to the future with my mind, I know that the future will become now. And I also know that the now will become the past. And so when I walk or whatever I do, and I keep on living in three-dimensional space, I have also experiences of a certain dimension of time which I call a time-length, and which is made up of a line coming from the future, passing through me and becoming a line of the past. That is only one dimension of time. But I become subject to it, because I start to measure space by means of time. And therefore it is very closely connected with each other and I use the same word for it - a time-length - as is indicated by a measure of myself which I express in the form of a time as time-length and is actually a distance that has taken place between one point of my life and the next point of my life.

Now how far I actually experience time, it is very difficult because I know that at certain moments in my experiences, time has a different kind of a meaning, and also different kind of time-length. Because sometimes time is very heavy on me and it doesn't seem to pass very quickly through me. At other times, time comes in and is gone and I've lost actually the experience of time because it has become much more of a moment to me. Now the difficulty that we have in measuring time - although we do measure it with ourselves - that what really counts as time is the change-over from the time direction when it hits me into going into the past. I think I've explained that. When time comes to me as future and produces in me anticipation, then at the moment when it reaches me, and because it is a Moment, it

is a point in the space of my life in which the distance between the future and myself has been annihilated. It has been reduced to that kind of a point. Reaching me at this point, it changes the direction because then it goes away from me. So when time comes to me, it hits me at a point, goes away from me, becomes past, and it is registered in me as memory. Although it is still a time-line, the line of time is not measured really by myself as I experience it. And for that I have to use a clock.

A clock is based on that what is not me. It is based on the revolution of the Earth around the Sun. And the Sun for me becomes stationary when I measure the direction the Earth takes around the Sun by judging where the Sun is at certain times of what we call a year. And it is that kind of revolution that I start to measure in certain time-lengths by means of a watch. And I call the rotations - which I now become involved in when I study astronomy - the time-length is a year for rotation around the Sun, but since the Earth itself also rotates, it becomes a day and a night, and twenty-four hours I call it, simply because the question of twelve becomes quite predominant when I start to consider spaces of time-length for the duration of the Sun rotating perhaps, but apparently rotating around us, although that is not so - the Earth rotates around the Sun - but for practical experimental purposes, it's quite all right to assume that the Sun is doing it. So my time definition is based on whatever is not natural for me, and I take simply the Sun time for me as a measure by which I judge everything else.

Now this question of time, that it is already different for me when I am so-called subjectively experiencing it, Gurdjieff calls it 'unique subjectivity', because it is a form of subjectivity which I really cannot count on. And in that sense, it is different also in the same way as my feeling is something I cannot count on, because I cannot express it in anything else but words. And when I want to count on it I would have to have a language for my feelings which I don't have. And the question also of the mind, I cannot at certain times count on it, not necessarily because I can lose time, as if time didn't exist, by thinking. There are certain times in which my mind, as thought, is not expressed in any words whatsoever, and still I know that not only time has elapsed, but I've had an experience which I could not express in the time-length it would take. And sometimes I call it a 'flash of a Moment' which I experience and which seems to be completely free from that time-length. Now continuing with that: the Moment at which this particular time reaches me, becomes a point of dimensionality within myself as expressed in space, and it becomes a Moment when it is expressed in time.

Now there are different ways by which I want to look further at time as such. When time can exist as a line, it can also move as a line, very similar to the production of a plane when I have an ordinary line as between two points -a

distance between two points. When a time-length moves, not in the direction of itself, it describes a totality of time existing at any one point or at any one time. That means the totality of time existing, for me as well as for anyone else on this Earth, at the particular moment when life exists in all the different creatures of Life, including the moment which exists for the Earth itself - that I call horizontal time. And it is very interesting to think about, that time, although it is subjective to each person, at any one moment, each person having subjective time, makes up totally an experience of time which is then distributed over the plane of time as existing by organic kingdom. You can think about that.

In the same way, when a plane of time exists, there is also a possibility that this time can go in a direction, as a plane, not in the direction of the plane itself but, let's say for a moment, perpendicular to it. That we call vertical time. And the concept that is formed is a cube of time. What does it mean? Again referring it to experiences of people living: my own time, vertically expressed, is the concept of my time existing when I was born until the moment I die. That is for me my vertical time-length. I call it my life-time. At the same time, exactly the same condition exists for all people existing. And all have, in their lifetime, a beginning at their birth and an end when they die. And so when, at any one time moment, when there is a plane, there is also a verticality of all such vertical times existing, making them the third dimension of time and forming then a cube of time as a time-solid. That is the limitation of my thought. That is as far as I can experience it and also as far as I can conceive of it.

I can quite definitely experience also vertical time. It would be easy if I, at any one time, could condense that what is represented by my life-line and my lifetime, that is, that what is me and not necessarily connecting it with all other times in other people. If I consider my own possibility of a verticalness, I can compare it to the telescoping of time vertically, reaching then a point within me - when I express it in the language of time, I call it a Moment. And it is interesting that these kind of flashes exist, that there are experiences by human people who actually see their own life as a condensation or a contraction of time itself. And at such a time, they see the totality of themselves from early birth until even the Moment when they happen to be alive. I think it takes place when a person is born, and I also think it takes place when he dies. I think there are also very special experiences by some people when they realize in the flash of a Moment, seeing their whole life totally developed from beginning to the Moment where they are, as if it is in one Moment a realization of their existence.

Now you understand a little bit about this question of time and nature. The introduction of unnatural means trying to become free from those three dimensions of space and three dimensions of time; in general we say from the six possibilities

of dimensionality. I'm looking now within myself for that kind of experience and I find that, within myself, when I reach a point of, you might call it, no return - a point by which sometimes--which can be reached when I go from the periphery and I become more and more essential and then realize the essential essence of myself, I come to a point. That point is the indication that in whatever direction I go, I return. Because I cannot visualize that, even if I continue on the same line, I go again through this point to the periphery of myself. The same way as the central point of a sphere - take the Earth for instance - I go from here to the central point of the Earth. If I continue, I reach the antipodes on the other side, hundred and eighty degrees away from here. So you see, that particular point becomes extremely important and we call that Life par excellence, Life as existing, and where the beginning of my life was when I was conceived. At that moment of conception, it was free from dimensionality when it started to exist in my form, it became more and more dimensional.

And so now, when I wish to see what it is in me at times that I can reach this particular experience of being non-dimensional, I start to compare it with the possibility of an experience of freedom, or sometimes mentally I express it as awe, and sometimes feelingly I express it as not having any possibility of any words expressing my feeling. These are the three potentialities which still exist as potential. That what is within me, as Magnetic Center, has no further potentiality than only the wish to set it free. The other two potentialities within my Emotional state, and within my Intellectual state , still can become actual. And so I must use that what is for me my own solidity within as a beginning of that what has a realization of non-dimensionality. I know I'm talking theoretical but I want to make quite clear what I mean, because it is very much dependent on that particular point which is non-subjective, and from which really the wish starts within me to develop, because there is the realization of bondage of that particular Magnetic Center within myself which, at a certain time, wishes to Wake up, and is helped in Waking up by that what is 'I' searching me, this Essentiality Rssence of myself which I call many times the Sleeping Beauty and the 'I' is the Charming Prince.

It is a search many times - I compare it to many folklore stories, and particularly let's say, Parsival or that what is the hunt for the Golden Stag or the Golden Fleece in Greek mythology. All of them have an aim to illustrate what is really the search of a man when he becomes aware of the possibility for himself for that kind of freedom. And the 'I' existing is a result of the sincere wish within this Sleeping Beauty, wanting to be set free and not continue to sleep, that then produces in the different functions of myself a potentiality which is awakened and wishes then to become actual by means of the acquisition of certain ways of Work. So that my real wish for wanting to Work comes from the Essentiality Essence of

myself; that that what is still you might say, unspoiled and remember, in this question of self-remembering, it's real Self. This time the 'S' is with a capital.

M1167

Time is a process that flows through one. And that whatever is coming toward one which we still call future, flows through one at the Moment of the recognition of time flowing through one would be a Moment of existence. But we're not used to be able to do this. We think about the time and then immediately it's past, and that as soon as I say 'I', it is already past.

The realization of a Moment is a question of developing something that can register Instantaneousness, and then for that reason it has to be Objective. Because everything else that I consider of thinking of what is coming or thinking what has gone on remains subjective.

Objectivity is the only answer to it, if Objectivity is defined as non-subjective. But in non-subjectivity there is no dimension anymore. Time always has a dimension. It can never invade anything because whenever there is time that crosses each other it forms a point in time, but that is still subject to each one or the other line.

The first dimension is a line.

The second is a plane of time.

The third dimension of time is a solid of time.

All of that is subjective. All of that remains unconscious.

It's only the reduction of that what is a solid again to a plane; from a plane a reduction to a line; and the reduction of a line to a point which will create a moment: The telescoping of time. If you know, for instance, Hinton, C. H. Hinton's book *The Fourth Dimension*, he's clear. Bennett is not clear; I'm sorry, but he just misses the boat. And so does Ouspensky in many ways.

The realization of the Instantaneousness of a Moment is a question of one's Awareness. And it is Awareness in which a mental process takes place without any thought. And for a man to be without thought is very difficult to achieve. One tries; Ouspensky says you can. You cannot - with your ordinary mind it's impossible, because you keep on thinking that you should be strong. It's impossible. But it is possible intuitively to realize certain things existing without giving it a name. And whenever I introduce anything that is subjective with me, either in the form of a mental process, of a recognition, a pigeon holing, or giving it a name, or if I feel it, and I like or dislike it, or criticize, in some way, immediately my subjectivity will take over. As soon as the Instantaneousness of an intuition could be registered as such, without doing anything about it, then I would have a Moment of existence which would be objective.

M1115

What is time? Measurement of what? Space, movement of one point from one place to another. I say it takes time. If movement in space for me between two points is indicated by a line, a linear direction - I call it a first dimension as far as space is concerned. And at times that it is consumed I call the first dimension of time. It is absolutely parallel to each other. And when we talk about the second and the third dimension of space it also has its counterpart in the second and third dimension of time. So that really there are six concepts, three of one kind belonging to space, the other three belonging to a time concept which again is dependent on the movement of something in space.

The second dimension that I call a dimension in space has of course to do with the movement of a line in a plane which is in accordance with a line not in the direction of the original line. The movement of any line not in its own direction, but with an angle, will describe a space of a certain surface which is two-dimensional. That what takes place in time is the movement of a time line as a certain time elapsing between two points, in a space which is now not in the same direction as the original time dimension. It describes then a plane of time. The movement of a plane in space will create a third dimension. The movement of a plane in time creates the third dimension of time. What is meant by that?

The first one, dimension in space, I call length, the second width, the third height. In time that what I call the duration of time is simply the length of time as measured by certain instruments and ultimately measured by the way the Earth travels around the sun, that is as far as our own solar system is concerned our measure of time. The second dimension of time, the movement of a line in space of time, is that at any one point all times, as experienced by every person, is then noticed and becomes a certain plane of time, the totality of all men having time as an experience.

The third dimension of time is the realization of all time as has been experienced by each person from the earliest moments of his conception to the moment of his death, or up to the time he is considering this particular question. This implies of course that at any one time each person has his own time as experience and that his time dies with him. For that reason Gurdjieff says that it becomes ‘unique subjective’, because there is nothing of my time or anyone else’s time that can be compared and only in the use of the word time. And that I describe my time again in comparing it to something that I believe has a certain time because it seems like a recurrence of certain events which are spaced together in a certain time length between two points which are similar, that is, if the Earth turns around the sun, the seasons indicate for me the time and also as far as space is

concerned the stars or the Sun itself indicate as seen from the Earth a certain place which again recurs after a length of time.

Now the question of a Moment. If I divide time as I know it into different sections and I say there (- - -) is a year, so many days the Sun going up and down, dark and light, a day I say 24 hours, 12 on an average light, 12 on an average dark. It means of course that there, as certain as I call them hours, I call them 24, 12, whatever, indicated probably by the Zodiac or wherever it is the particular figure 12 came from. It is still too big for me to fathom it, so I will divide an hour into 60 minutes and then again this 60 minutes each minute becomes a second. Now where does a Moment come in? You see it is not a second and it is not even a short length of time. A Moment is only a point. No more. And it can only be conceived by a person, that is he can have an experience of a Moment when he has in him an instrument which is also non-dimensional. In other words, a Moment belongs to the Objective world.

All other ideas of time belong to the subjective world. And when I say Simultaneity, Simultaneousness, it means that I have to have a concept of a Moment which Moment again when I want to bring it down to Earth, has to be registered and that registration has to be instantaneous. So I use words now that have an Objective value in the midst of subjective concepts. And (- - - - - - -) difficult to experience them because immediately whenever I experience anything, I will want to put it in a word, and as soon as it is in a word, time has elapsed and also I have chosen a form which becomes dimensional. So you see the description, of even a feeling of that what is now taking place as an object for me, never is Objective as long as I want to describe it in any form whatsoever, or I want to indicate that I have felt it. And perhaps the closest I get to the idea of Objectivity is when I realize the Moment of intuition which for me does not require any particular word and only a statement to myself that there is - all of a sudden - this is a Moment, all of sudden something registers in me which I consider knowledge. That is, a fact.

The wish can become permanent. But it has to be fed all the time by the experiences of oneself. And the experiences will give you the possibility sometimes that you have already had, or an experience becomes greater intensity or it also can have a different kind of color because you are not used to it. The mind is still developing and it has all kinds of possibilities of further developing, but the only time it will be able to get away from itself, is by the introduction of something that is unusual for the mind as it is now. So, this is what I meant, going from one level to another, it has to have a quality of that what belongs to the higher level. And by definition the higher level has an Objective quality, as this level has a subjective one. Everything that remains subjective, must be bound to this level. Everything as an experience that I have now which has a little bit of a possibility of Objectivity starts to belong already to the next level. And if I have a moment of Infinity, I am at that time at the higher level.

But the Moment for me is not as yet endless. It is still subject to being effaced because of the surrounding being moments of time. How can I say it differently? That, what is time for me, at the present time, are still component parts of that what is Infinity. Every form of time including a point in time has still the possibility of going out in any direction of time so it still could become dimensional. Exactly like a point in space and a point in time remain subjective, almost I would say by definition, because they are still component parts which stay on the level of subjectivity. But when I say “Moment” I have changed the point into a Moment, and the Moment has never the chance of becoming dimensional. A Moment can expand, and there can be more Moments as Moments experienced, but all Moments have no dimensions for me. And what I now call the totality of time in experience, a Moment in Infinity, simply means that the three dimensions of time have been reduced to a Moment of existence, in which Moment all dimension has become one.

It is that process in which the fusion of the three dimensions of time have become an entity of Infinity which is represented by the Moment. Our words are very bad you see because when I say “a Moment”of time, I do not mean time, this time, as time. I mean it as a Moment of existence. But I use the word time as an expression because my limited way of expressing it intellectually, I have to use the concepts that are familiar to me now. The ultimate of the experience of the Moment is silence. But such silence in which there is not even a wish for expression. Every once in a while one can have a concept of it, when one says “absolute silence” in which nothing is heard. I have a concept. I don’t know if I have the experience, until everything absolutely, regarding every form of manifestation of myself, simply stops. And that is why I ask sometimes, let time stand still. But the closest I

get to it is when I have an Emotional state in which I in prayer, you might say, fuse myself into one, becoming at that time God, in a mystical relationship. This is as far as Emotion is concerned. As far as mind is concerned, Gurdjieff uses the term of "seeing the lights of Karatas". It doesn't mean they are there. They are on their way. At the same time, that what my mind allows me is concepts of Eternity. Only a concept. Not the experience. But the fact that the concept is possible in my mind, gives me the assurance that the experience also can be reached.

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In that way it will start as as a belief. Belief is still that what is not as yet. But the confidence is the assurance that it can be.

Thelma: You said three dimensions of time. Is this taking it away when I ask, "What are the three dimensions of time?"

Mr. Nyland: It's a little difficult. I understand length is from one point to another which takes time to go from one place to another.

Thelma: Like from here to there?

Mr. Nyland: Yea. Or like the clock ticks the time off. That is, my life is one-dimensional from beginning of birth to death. And it is measured with some kind of an instrument, which I call a clock, which is based again ultimately on the movement of the Earth around the Sun. What ever it is, I call it phenomenal year, a something of time exists like that because it happens to exist in any kind of a material form when I set certain things in motion or it takes that same kind of motion as expressed with little diagram when I go from one place to another. This is only one dimensional.

The fact that this kind of a time exists in different people at the same time gives me another dimension of time. Because it simply means that that kind of a time which I now experience and which is my own and which I digest in whichever way it is, is also a concept that exists in a variety of people all over wherever I happen to now think about them, this gives me an idea of a dimension possibility of times existing in other people, not only in me. And it becomes then a certain plane of time as represented by the totality of all beings having also concepts of time. And this I can understand that in that way time starts to exist in space. Not in my own time-line, but in that what is represented by the totality of all mankind, having time concepts. You see? This I call simply space - it is a different way - it is not my experience - I can conceive of it, it exists as a plane of time.

Now the third dimension of time is a historical one. It is bound up with that what I am in my own life from beginning to end but it is also bound up with that what is the beginning and end of everybody else's time. And it is bound up -with everything that is subject to time as I see it like the Earth from its early historical state into whatever development it will go into. So whenever I place now time in that sense, not horizontally but in any kind of a vertical line that indicates the historical value of it, I get a third dimension, so that I in my life can experience an ordinary time length of going from here to there but that in itself also indicates that I also have historical time which is simply added up of all the time lines which I now experience during my life which is different from the usage of time in one dimension. The totality of that kind of a plane that I can imagine but a verticality in my own plane is of course my life as it is from beginning to end. But for all others it's the same thing so that then their dimension of time applying to the totality of time as represented by the plane becomes a solid. And those are the three dimensions.

It's a little difficult sometimes because it doesn't matter where you start if the time-line for oneself is one-dimensional one can then immediately go over into the verticality of himself as a line and then consider that as a second dimension and the totality of everyone else as life existing can then become the third dimension. It doesn't matter how you look at it.

Iva Blank: I'd like to ask something that comes up of that what is, it's another way to try to ask you what I've asked before. Uh, you asked me the last time I asked a question, "Do you know the difference between the force of the structure that holds life and life itself"? I, I had to say I don't know and I don't know now to think of life without the kind of coherence it seems to me would hold it and without boundaries where, if I understood you, that, that way of being, apprehending, looking at life would, would enable me to be free. freer of the structure and form of forms. I'm not clear.

Mr. Nyland: Let me try to explain a little bit more. It, it may help. The problem is a difficult one. In the first place, if one wants to look at an object and if, under the influence of that what is the observer, this object will lose its form and become transparent, it is for a long time that the edges of the transparency still will remain as a form. Now, this is this question of Life that I want to understand that it is within, and I judge by the movements and the behavior, that there is Life because if it doesn't move I say it's dead. So now I also must introduce the fact that Life exists in a variety of different forms which are not my own. I can understand to some extent that what I am as an alive person because I'm active, but I don't know what other forms of Life really represent and only by looking at it, and I'm not familiar with such forms because they don't belong to my experience, actually. All they are is an object for my observation and then I see them, but that what I see is not my own; it is just an image which reaches my brain and is registered as a form itself and I can say, of course, that there is Life in that form.

Now I try to see Life in two different ways, and it has to do with a different kind of a concept. I am what I am on this Earth, and so is everybody. I now try to express to myself and to become clear as a concept that all forms of Life exist at this moment. That every body existing now is alive in a form, and that that what I call the totality of Life expressed on a horizontal plane is the forms of behavior of each kind of a person including plants and animals which are now in that form expressing Life. This already gives me an idea that Life is quite different from form, because I now talk about such a variety of forms which are completely outside of my domain and because of imagining the totality of all forms existing, I become much freer from Life which is expressed though them, because I don't define the form as much any more. This is what we call a horizontal impression I get from the existence, sometimes I say, time being expressed by a variety of different entities, on a horizontal plane.

Now, there is an other way in which time also counts, but this time it is from a beginning to an end. I look at an object as it has been made and I see the finished

product. I try to imagine how it came into existence, very much the same as when I look at a person and I see him young. I see him being born, I see him also grown up, I see him also as an old, older person. The form remains the same, more or less. That what is the same is Life, and it is from the beginning to the end, enclosed in the form.

I look at a match. I see what is there as the end product of the match which can be struck and then catches fire. I see it as a little piece of wood. I see this pliece of wood as part of a tree. I see it as a forest. I see it as a production of such match sticks being made. I see the match sticks arrive at a factory. I see them being employed in a certain process in which they are dipped. I see that what takes place in the dipping, dipping it in a mixture of phosphorous, usually white phosphorous, which has a capacity of burning. I see it again being dipped in a, in something that is red phosphorous in order to sustain the flame of the match. And finally I see it packed up in a little box or in, as a form of a book match, I see it now arriving in a store, I see it on display, I see it being bought by me, I see it now in my hand and I'm ready to use it. All during that period I have followed the particular process of life within a form which starts to change. And that is the interesting part, particularly when I apply it to that what I call Life in animated form and not, perhaps, as a match. At the same time, I describe that what we call a vertical line of time, and so now in this particular process, in the consideration of Life, I must see it as a form which is subject to three dimensions. I will explain.

There are always difficulties in defining anything that we are familiar with when we wish to describe it and we come to the point where we cannot describe it any more or where the description ought to be sufficient. If I'm troubled about concepts of space and time I really get stuck at a certain place because apparently I can distinguish between three different concepts of either space or time, and then I say "I do not know what is next". I prattle a little bit about the fourth dimension, and indicating by that time. I may as well talk about the first dimension of time the, the second and the third, the same way as I talk about the cube, a solid, which has length and width and depth, or height, whichever way you want to call it. Three dimensional.

In a three dimensional form I can imagine that three dimensions be reduced to a point, and from there on I can philosophize further by the utilization of that what has been shrunk into one point again going through the same process of a formation. Now, parallel to that kind of a concept, I introduce time. Time being that what is from one point to another and the time consumed during that process. But I also can imagine this line of time being spread out in the direction of, not of the line itself, that is continuation of that direction but you might say, perpendicular to it in describing a plane. And then I can imagine that the description of the plane,

when it moves also in a direction perpendicular to it, describes a cube. The horizontal one, the plane, I call horizontal time; that is, the imagination, if I can conceive of that, of a totality of all Life existing at a certain moment, all having a manifestation, everywhere on this Earth at this moment, on this plane of the Earth. I call now the description of the cube of time, that is the verticalness, that is the movement of the plane in the direction perpendicular to it, I call that vertical time. That means everything existing in any form from beginning to end, when it is originally made or created, and when it finally destroys its own form.

Now, you see, I know these things in an entirely different light, because I become more and more free from what I have as a concept of my own, and I, being limited in concepts of that what I'm seeing, and definitely being bound in any form of the three dimensions, either in space or in time, I simply let it go because it becomes now a totality of certain things existing in any kind of a form and any kind of life being expressed. And with that I see more and more the distinction between life itself as eternity, and the forms as being limited. I hope you can follow it.

Iva Blank: But that's why, then, I have to give up the spaces too...

Mr. Nyland: You do, constantly, because the space is endless and so is time.

Iva Blank: . . . and not care whether they're filled or not.

Mr. Nyland: Yea. You see, it is our own limitation that causes it. And one has to learn to develop certain things that are quite different in function. If I want to become Conscious, my brain as it is, being in an unconscious state, has to change entirely to a Conscious entity. I say that many times, it's a question of a difference of that what is in the beginning and goes through a scale of a "Do-Re-Mi, Fa, Sol-La-Si" and ends up in a "Do". At the "Do" it is an entirely different state as quality, because it is then vibrating at a certain rate which, in an octave, happens to be twice as much as the lower "Do".

You see, I have have to change my instruments. I'm limited at the present time by the instrument of my brain, the way it is, and I call it unconscious. It means, simply that it has a certain capacity for just a limited mtmber of impressions. The same is true for my feeling, and many times the feeling is not always developed, even. I sometimes say it functions from the solar plexis, it should function from one's heart, when I say that what is my mind is not at all Conscious and it can become Conscious in a little bit section, it still has to go from that particular small section to the totality of my brain.

And these are the processes that we talk about. If I want to change my feeling into an emotional state, I have to enlarge the capacity of including much

more of life than I at the present time allow in my own, own unconscious selfishness. And there is no, no particular reason why I should be sorry about it. It is just a matter of fact that I describe of the condition in which I happen to live when I am on earth. And then automatically, if I would leave earth and would go to a higher level of being, then also the different capacities of my self would change, and the different concepts that I now must adhere to are going to be measured by an entirely different kind of measurement.

It's all our own. It is our idea, how we think and how we feel, that makes that kind of a world for us. And it's logical, because we constantly are reacting to that world which has been created for which we are not responsible, but which becomes part of us as a form of reaction of being impressed by it. And from there on, we become part of that world in our reaction concepts. And to break that, that terrible situation, that we belong to that what we see or what we hear or what we experience in any kind of a sense organ, to let it go over into a kind of a world which Is governed by different sense organs. And when Gurdjieff talks about the sixth and the seventh sense, that's exactly what has to be developed.
But don't let's go too far in that. It is up to us, and the limitations. I'm limited in my height, I don't grow any more. I'm not a giant and I never will become one. That is the limit of Mother Mature. There is a limitation to the capacity of my feeling, and there quite definitely is a limitation to what my mind can contain. And unless such capacities are changed, I will not become a different kind of a man. I will remain unconscious. I can improve it a little bit by, let's say, making it a little smoother and put some oil somewhere so that the manchinery can run a little easier, but it does not change the capacity of the machine.

Iva Blank: Can I want freedom?

Mr. Nyland: Oh! Without doubt. I think that's the aim. I think person when he is conceived or born, cries up when he enters into this life. He's absolutely not happy in the very beginning. He can not understand, even, why he does it, why it is done to him, unless there is an understanding in the previous life existing and he enters into this earthy on this earth, as a result of the fulfillment of his karma. It's only at such a time that there is within his own Magnetic Center that what connects him to his mother as he is being born and through which life as such can flow, if that is there and there is a very definite realization for him that he comes here for a definite purpose, then he will accept the form of life for the reason of being able to eliminate his karma; that is, his bondage.

But there are not many people conscious of that. Perhaps at the moment of birth, perhaps. But very soon, being under the influence of the earth itself, the atmosphere of different people around him, and all forms of limlted-ness, such a

little baby already looses such concepts within a very, very short time. And that, afterwards, there is no education that we go through that encourages us to continue to believe that life exists as eternity, and everything is interrupted as having an end, ending up by death, and we assume that that is the law of life. In reality it's only the law of the form. The destruction does not take place in life itself. It's only the form that is destroyed. But what we call, so-called a process taking place on Earth, is determined and is defined by the conditions of the form only. Not life. When one understands Life, then one understands why there is a wish for freedom. And then one says, "if it is necessary that I go through this particular performing on Earth, I have to find out why I have to live this way". And only when I then can find out and make attempts for that kind of understanding will I be entitled to the freedom of my life. All right?

Dimensions of Time
from
In Search of the Miraculous
P. D. Ouspensky

”A three-dimensional body differs from the point, the line, and the plane by the fact that it has a real physical existence for our perception.”The plane is in fact only a projection of a body, the line is a projection of a plane, and the point is a projection of a line.

”A ‘body’ has an independent physical existence, that is, it possesses a number of different physical properties.

”But when we say a thing ‘exists,’ we mean by this existence in time. But there is no time in three-dimensional space. Time lies outside the three-dimensional space. Time, as we feel it, is the fourth dimension. Existence is for us existence in time. Existence in time is movement or extension along the fourth dimension. If we take existence as an extension along the fourth dimension, if we think of life as a four-dimensional body, then a three-dimensional body will be its section, its projection, or its limit.

”But existence in time does not embrace all the aspects of existence. Apart from existing in time, everything that exists, exists also in eternity.

”Eternity is the infinite existence of every moment of time. If we conceive time as a line, then this line will be crossed at every point by the lines of eternity. Every point of the line of time will be a line in eternity. The line of time will be a plane of eternity. Eternity has one dimension more than time. Therefore, if time is the fourth dimension, eternity is the fifth dimension. If the space of time is four-dimensional, then the space of eternity is five-dimensional.

”Further, in order to understand the idea of the fifth and the sixth dimensions, a certain view of time must be established.

”Every moment of time contains a certain number of possibilities, at times a small number, at others a great number, but never an infinite number. It is necessary to realize that there are possibilities and there are impossibilities. I can take from this table and throw on the floor a piece of paper, a pencil, or an ash-tray, but I cannot take from the table and throw on the floor an orange which is not on the table. This clearly defines the difference between possibility and impossibility. There are several combinations of possibilities in relation to things which can be thrown on the floor from this table. I can throw a pencil, or a piece of paper, or an ash-tray, or else a pencil and a piece of paper, or a pencil and an ash-tray, or a piece of paper and an ash-tray, or all three together, or nothing at all. There are only these possibilities. If we take as a moment of time the moment when these possibilities exist, then the next moment will be a moment of the actualization of one of the possibilities. A pencil is thrown on the floor. This is the actualization of one of the possibilities. Then a new moment comes. This moment also has a certain number of

possibilities in a certain definite sense. And the moment after it will again be a moment of the actualization of one of the possibilities. The consecutiveness of these moments of actualization of one possibility constitutes the line of time. But each moment of time has an infinite existence in eternity. The possibilities which have been actualized continue to be endlessly actualized in eternity, while the non-actualized possibilities continue to remain non-actualized and non-actualizable.

"But all the possibilities that have been created or have originated in the world must be actualized. The actualization of all the possibilities created or originated constitutes the world's being. At the same time there is no place for the actualization of these possibilities within the limits of eternity. In eternity everything that has been actualized continues to be actualized and everything non-actualized continues to remain non-actualized. Eternity, however, is only a plane crossed by the line of time. At every point of this line there remains a certain number of non-actualized possibilities. If we imagine the line of the actualization of these possibilities, they will proceed along radii issuing from one point at different angles to the line of time and the line of eternity. These lines will proceed outside eternity, outside the five-dimensional space, in 'higher eternity' or in six-dimensional space, in the sixth dimension.

"The sixth dimension is the line of the actualization of all possibilities.

"The fifth dimension is the line of the eternal existence or repetition of the actualized possibilities.

"The fourth dimension is the sequence of the moments of the actualization of one possibility.

"As I have said, seven dimensions, from zero-dimension to the sixth dimension, constitute the full period of dimensions. Beyond this period there is either nothing or the same period may repeat itself on another scale.

Man and Time

J.B. Priestely

Chapter 11 Esoteric School

1.

The elaborate system of thought, behavior, psychological development, taught by Gurdjieff and his chief disciple, Ouspensky, was often called by them and their pupils the Work. To save space and trouble I shall follow their example. Now, to begin with, it is surprising how little public attention has been given to the Work. A good deal has been written about it from the inside—I must possess at least 20 of such books myself—but, so far as I know, nothing of importance from the outside. If a disinterested critical examination of Gurdjieff's teaching and ideas exists it has never come my way. There are two reasons why I find this neglect surprising.

The first is that from the early 1920s onward, groups dedicated to studying the Work came into existence in Paris and London and probably other European capitals, in New York and Mexico City and various places in South America. (As the Work had no central organization and never advertised itself—a fact worth remembering—I doubt if a complete list of its groups is available anywhere.) The second reason, though here I can refer only to the British groups, is that although their numbers may not have been impressive, their quality was. Any idea that this was a movement supported by rich foolish women, for the benefit of charlatans, can be dismissed at once.

No doubt some rather dim people did drift in and out of the Work. But to name only two of its students, now dead: A. R. Orage, once the most brilliant editor in Britain, and Maurice Nicoll, a pupil of Jung and then a distinguished Harley Street specialist, were anything but dim. And indeed the Work was always able to provide itself with suitable buildings because it could command the services of architects, engineers, expert professional men. The level of Gurdjieff's and Ouspensky's most devoted students was very high. In order to study this movement, nobody will have to do any intellectual slumming.

I make these points simply out of a sense of fairness. I was never a member of any of these groups myself; I never set eyes on Gurdjieff or Ouspensky; and my acquaintance with their chief successors in the Work has been very limited. But a certain amount of rubbish, deposited by ignorance and prejudice, must be cleared away. True, the Work has a semi-oriental background, arriving from mysterious sources in mid-Asia, where Gurdjieff (himself a kind of humorous magician who enjoyed elaborate mystifications) was supposed to have spent years in search of esoteric truths, ancient secret wisdom. But the Work is far removed from the usual

soft and sentimental doctrines of Higher Thought, Theosophy, and the rest: It is hard, demanding, grimly unsentimental.

It insists upon men making unwearied efforts to free themselves from a waking sleep or being mere machines, to become fully conscious, to build up a central commanding "I" in place of a score of contradictory "I's," to rid themselves of wasteful and stupid negative emotions, to make "essence" grow at the expense of false "personality," and not to imagine they are in easy possession of immortal souls but to believe that in the end, after un-remittent effort, they might create in themselves such an indestructible, soul. (It is in fact a kind of esoteric Christianity, and readers interested in this aspect should look at Maurice Nicoll's *The New Man and The Mark*, in which he re-interprets the Gospels.)

I wish there were space here for some account of Gurdjieff's psychological system and his elaborate and fascinating cosmology, but our subject is Time and we must pursue it. I will only add—as an outsider who is merely a reader and was never a member of the personally instructed groups (and this was considered to be essential)—that while some of the Work seems to me as dubious as Gurdjieff's claim to have rescued this "ancient wisdom" from unnamed remote mid-Asian monasteries, he does often reveal some astonishingly original insights, and some of the simpler "work on oneself" does actually bring some excellent results. Whether Gurdjieff was a new prophet and teacher or a Near Eastern original, two thirds genius, one third charlatan, he certainly knew a great deal more about our common humanity than most of us know.

However, we must return to Time. This brings us to Ouspensky. He was a Russian journalist, author, lecturer, who had some acquaintance with the sciences and mathematics but was chiefly interested in what he called "the miraculous" and in the possibility of discovering some esoteric "school" (a very important term afterward in the Work) in which initiates would receive personal teaching. (Years later, when he lectured to groups in London, the proceedings were given an air, very Russian, of quite unnecessary mystery.) He had just finished a long journey in the East when the First War broke out:

> I said to myself then that the war must be looked upon as one of those generally catastrophic conditions of life in the midst of which we have to live and. work, and seek answers to our questions and doubts. The war, the great European war, in the possibility of which I had not wanted to believe and the reality of which I did not for a long time wish to acknowledge, had become a fact. We were in it and I saw that it must be taken as a great memento mod showing that hurry was necessary and that it was impossible to believe in "life" which led nowhere. . . .

In Moscow in 1915 he met Gurdjieff, who had gone to Russia to teach some groups, and he was soon under the spell of that powerful and enigmatic personality. They were obviously very different types. Ouspensky bookish and solemn, Gurdjieff vastly more experienced, with a richer and warmer nature, sly and

humorous, an Autolyeus turned sorcerer and sage. When, after the Russian Revolution and during the Civil War, Gurdjieff had to lead his party of followers through the wilds of the Caucasus, where Reds and White were fighting, he coolly announced that they were about to do some gold mining in the neighborhood, wherever they happened to be, and so they were unmolested, often helped, by both armies. (With people in authority or inquirers he did not welcome, Gurdjieff liked to appear rather simple and stupid, some old carpet merchant too far from home. There is an innocently revealing account of this performance by Rom Landau in his *God is My Adventure*.)

Ouspensky soon accepted the authority of Gurdjieff's teaching without question, and became its leading exponent. But gradually he made a distinction between Gurdjieff the man and the Work itself. By the time, in 1922, Gurdjieff had opened his famous Institute at Fontainebleau, Ouspensky had already settled in London, at work with his own groups. He remained in London for nearly 20 years, going to America during the war and then returning afterward to England, where he died in 1947.

(It has been noticed that the leading personages in these Gurdjieff-Ouspensky groups, so determinedly devoted to self-development, were by no means free of misunderstandings, acrimonious disputes, downright quarrels. These could not have been much helped by the chilly reserve and severe authoritarianism of Ouspensky, who probably never felt at home in England and denied himself to all but a few of his closest associates. It is only fair to add, however, that the Work itself, after a long period of unquestioning pupil-hood, encouraged men to strike out for independence; and Gurdjieff's insults and sudden rages were a part of his tactics, compelling his chief followers to stand up for themselves and march away, to make what they could out of his system, free of his direct influence. Here was a very remarkable man).

Something has had to be said about Gurdjieff because of his influence upon Ouspensky. It is Ouspensky, however, who is important here, just because it is he and not Gurdjieff who is concerned with the Time problem. Gurdjieff—and I say this only on the basis of what I have read— never appears to have had this concern. He seems to have been rather evasive, neither fully agreeing with Ouspensky's theories nor completely denying them. But while Time theories as such played no part in the Work, the "Merciless Heropass," which has a sinister cosmological role in his *All and Everything*, may be regarded as symbolic of Time. Moreover, we are told that the Work aims at freeing us from the destructive action of Time "by reproducing in ourselves the creative act whereby the Universe itself is liberated from destruction" (Bennett).

Ouspensky's interest in the subject was there long before he met Gurdjieff. It can be discovered in *Tertium Organum*, published in 1922, and his first book to be translated into English. Though it has been frequently reprinted, it is to my mind much inferior to his second book, published in 1931, *A New Model of the Universe*.

In his "Prefatory Note" Ouspensky claims that this book was begun and practically completed before 1914. But the chapters are dated, and what is for us the all-important chapter, "Eternal Recurrence," is dated 1912-1929, and by 1929 Ouspensky had not only accepted Gurdjieff's system, being indeed now its chief exponent, but had also more or less broken with his old master. So whether this is pure Ouspensky, brought up-to-date from 1912, or Ouspensky fortified by the brandy of Gurdjieff, I do not know. What I do know is that no examination of the Time problem can afford to let this chapter on "Eternal Recurrence" go unnoticed. Its bold challenge must be faced: Either it must be accepted or rejected.

2.

Ouspensky's theory of eternal recurrence must not be confused with the Great Circle or Year of the ancient Greeks, which I described in Chapter 5 (in Part Two). And it has nothing to do with Nietzsche's idea of recurrence, which Ouspensky, in a footnote, sharply and rightly rejects. (Nietzsche argued that the illimitable resources of the universe must produce other earths exactly like this one, and that then the same causes will make everything recur. But this is not true because the odds against exact repetition will multiply faster than the chances of it.) Ouspensky quotes examples of Western thought and feeling that suggest the idea of recurrence, but they are not impressive. After all, the deja vu effect is fairly common, and, as we have seen, there are explanations of it that do not involve recurrence.

Ouspensky's theory of eternal recurrence is really an extension—and, in my opinion, by no means a necessary one—of his idea of three-dimensional time, explained in a previous chapter, called, like the book itself, "A New Model of the Universe." Because, to present this idea, I shall have to quote his text, as I shall also have to do when we come to his theory of recurrence, there is a point I should like to make first.

It is this. Though I consider Ouspensky to have been a man of considerable intellect who produced genuinely original ideas of some value, and not at all the charlatan many scientists might imagine him to be, I think we are entitled to entertain some suspicion of his style and manner. A good scientist can be allowed a style and manner of dogmatic certainty, because he will offer proofs of what he is stating. Where he is uncertain, because no proofs are to hand, he will make plain his uncertainty.

On the other hand, I believe there is no harm in a man being freely and frankly speculative, saying in effect "I cannot help feeling" or "I have come to believe" whatever it may be. He takes the risk, it is true, of being denounced by logical positivists for writing emotive bosh. But that is no reason why he should shrink

from exploring the odd corners of his mind or trying to understand his queerer experiences. If in doing so he is merely being speculative, not making statements worth serious consideration according to logical positivism, then very well, there it is. (Without some license for speculation, advanced science might soon grind to a halt. And as Professor H. H. Price says: "If such writers as Hume and Mach and the modern Logical Positivists had lived in the early seventeenth century, physics would never have got itself started.")

But I agree with the other side in thinking that a man must be either conscientiously scientific in his approach or frankly speculative. What he must not do is to present his speculative untested ideas in a manner and style of dogmatic certainty that they are not entitled to claim. This is being pseudo-scientific. And with all his exceptional qualities, Ouspensky, like one or two of his disciples, too often assumes this pseudo-scientific manner, as if all were proved when in fact some things have not been proved, only asserted. This does not mean that his ideas are not worth serious consideration; I believe they are; but we must be a little suspicious of a manner that demands unquestioning acceptance.

Before arriving at eternal recurrence, Ouspensky declares that Time is three-dimensional:

> The three-dimensionality of time is completely analogous to the three-dimensionality of space. We do not measure space by cubes, we measure it linearly in different directions, and we do exactly the same with time, although in time we can measure only two coordinates out of three, namely the duration and the velocity; the direction of time is not for us a quantity but an absolute condition. Another difference is that in the case of space we realise that we are dealing with a three-dimensional continuum, whereas in the case of time we do not realise it. But, as has been said already, if we attempt to unite the three coordinates of time into one whole, we shall obtain a spiral.

After referring to the "excessive complexity" of "relativism," which presumably means the theory of relativity, a complexity resulting from its attempt to squeeze the universe into four dimensions, he continues:

> The three dimensions of time can be regarded as the continuation of the dimensions of space, i.e. as the "fourth", the "fifth" and "sixth" dimensions of space. A "six-dimensional" space is undoubtedly a "Euclidean continuum", but of properties and forms totally incomprehensible to us. The six-dimensional form of a body is inconceivable for us, and if we were able to apprehend it with our senses we should undoubtedly see and feel it as three-dimensional. Three-dimensionability is the function of our senses. Time is the boundary of our senses. Six-dimensional space is reality, the world as it is. This reality we perceive only through the slit of our senses, touch and vision, and define as three-dimensional space, ascribing to it Euclidean properties. Every six-dimensional body becomes

> for us a three-dimensional body existing in time, and the properties of the fifth and the sixth dimensions remain for us imperceptible.
>
> Six dimensions constitute a "period", beyond which there can be nothing except the repetition of the same period on a different scale. The period of dimensions is limited at one end by the point, and at the other by infinity of space multiplied by infinity of time, which in ancient symbolism was represented by two inter-section triangles, or a six-pointed star.

He goes on to examine these three dimensions of Time considered as the fourth, fifth, and sixth dimensions of space. The before-and-after line of the fourth dimension, the time we all recognize, needs no explanation. The fifth dimension forms a surface in relation to this line. Along it is the perpetual now of any given moment. In this fifth dimension is the true eternity, not unending movement along the fourth dimension but all the perpetual nows. But what about the sixth dimension, the third dimension of Time?

> The sixth dimension will be the line of the actualisation of other possibilities which were contained in the preceding moment but were not actualised in "time". In every moment and at every point of the three-dimensional world there are a certain number of possibilities; in "time", that is, in the fourth dimension, one possibility is actualised every moment, and these actualised possibilities are laid out, one beside the other, in the fifth dimension. The line of time, repeated infinitely in eternity, leaves at every point unactualised possibilities. But these possibilities which have not been actualised in one time, are actualised in the sixth dimension, which is an aggregate of "all times". The lines of the fifth dimension, which go perpendicular to the line of "time" in all possible directions, form the solid or three-dimensional continuum of time, of which we know only one dimension. We are one-dimensional beings in relation to time. Because of this we do not see parallel time or parallel times; ... we do not see the angles and turns of time, but see time as a straight line.
>
> Until now we have taken all the lines of the fourth, the fifth and the sixth dimensions as straight lines, as coordinates. But we must remember that these straight lines cannot be regarded as really existing. They are merely an imaginary system of coordinates for determining the spiral.

Now I shall presently begin disagreeing with Ouspensky, but we have not arrived yet at that point. No doubt many readers are already dismissing this account of a sixth dimension, with its actualizing of all possibilities, as complicated semi-mystical nonsense. But before they flip over the next pages in disgust, I ask them to remember that dream of the dead baby in the creek. The death of that baby could be an unactualized possibility, never happening in the fourth dimension, in chronological time. But the dream cannot be dismissed as a mere nothing; it may have saved a baby's life. And not being a mere nothing, it existed somewhere, in its own place and time.

In other words, I believe that a full explanation of that dream and its consequences may possibly demand a three-dimensional Time. Ouspensky here

may have been right, he may have been wrong, but nobody should be in a hurry to accuse him of talking nonsense.

I think he is wrong, however, when he conjures out of those three dimensions his theory of eternal recurrence. Ignoring the spiral, now using a wave analogy, he argues that the line of life or "time" moves in a curve and makes a complete revolution, coming back to the point of its departure. The moment of death coincides with the moment of birth. A man dies only to be born again. From this, to which I cannot give any assent, he goes on to make several points I have long felt to be true:

> Life in itself is time for man. For man there is not and cannot be any other time outside the time of his life. Man is his life. His life is his time.
> The way of measuring time, for all, by means of such phenomena as the apparent or real movement of the sun or the moon, is comprehensible as being convenient, practically. But it is generally forgotten that this is only a formal time accepted by common agreement. Absolute time for man is his life. There can be no other time outside this time.
>
> If I die today, tomorrow will not exist for me. But, as has been said before, all theories of the future life, of existence after death, of reincarnation, etc., contain one obvious mistake. They are all based on the usual understanding of time, that is, on the idea that tomorrow will exist after death. In reality it is just in this that life differs from death. Man dies because his time ends. There can be no tomorrow after death. But all usual conceptions of the "future life" require the existence of "tomorrow". What future life can there be, if it suddenly appears there is no future, no "tomorrow", no time, no "after"? Spiritualists . . . and others who know everything about the future life may find themselves in a very strange situation if the fact is realised that no "after" exists.

The reason why I agree with this limitation will appear later; but this agreement does not involve any acceptance of the idea of eternal recurrence. Having argued that eternity demands repetition, one life and time ending and another beginning, Ouspensky explains exactly what he has in mind:

> This means that if a man was born in 1877 and died in 1912, then, having died, he finds himself again in 1877 and must live the same life all over again. In dying, in completing the circle of life, he enters the same life from the other end. He is born again in the same town, in the same street, of the same parents, in the same year and on the same day. He will have the same brothers and sisters, the same uncles and aunts, the same toys, the same kittens, the same friends, the same women. He will make the same mistakes, laugh and cry in the same way, rejoice and suffer in the same way. And when the time comes he will die in exactly the same way as he did before, and again at the moment of his death it will be as though all the clocks were put back to 7.35 a.m. on the 2nd September 1877, and from this moment started again with their usual movement.

But after making this declaration, Ouspensky modifies it. Only people of "deeply-rooted, petrified, routine life" will live exactly the same life over and over again. There are three other types.

There are the outwardly successful who will find it easier and easier to succeed. There are "people whose life contains an inner ascending line, which gradually leads them out of the circle of eternal repetition and causes them to pass to another plane of being." And then there are the types with a "growing tendency to degeneration," who with each new life sink lower and finally cease to be born, for "souls are born and die just like bodies." A soul may die on one plane of being and pass to a higher plane, or it may die altogether, vanishing and ceasing to be.

Ouspensky embroiders this theme with great skill; and it all makes fascinating reading. I have no space here even to begin doing justice to his astonishing play of ideas, notably his strange but not absurd notion that reincarnation does not go forward into the future but back into the past—a great freed soul takes the place of somebody in the past in order to help humanity, whose past (which is still existing and so is still shaping our present and future) must be changed if men are to know a better present and future.

But though I have referred to Ouspensky's play of ideas, he was not in fact playing with them; however fantastic they may seem, he was entirely convinced of their truth. We are told how, during the last few weeks of his life, when he was often in great pain, by a formidable effort of will he insisted upon revisiting the places where he had lived in and around London. Presumably he was trying to fix them so deeply in his memory that when his life recurred he would remember them.

(We are told this by one of his closest and most devoted admirers in these last years, Rodney Collin Smith, who after Ouspensky's death organized Work groups in Mexico City and elsewhere in Mexico. In 1956 he visited Peru, and after climbing to the cathedral belfry at Cuzco he had a heart attack, fell to the street, and was killed. He was a writer as well as a teacher of the Work, and under the name of Rodney Collin, published *The Theory of Celestial Influence* and *The Theory of Eternal Life*. These are attractively written and offer many clues to Ouspensky's later thinking—Ouspensky being the master and the author the most devoted of his pupils—but they cover too much ground too quickly and are too obvious examples of the pseudo-scientific approach, as if the general reader were an admiring member of a Work group.)

I believe every intelligent reader should make the acquaintance of Ouspensky's *A New Model of the Universe*. And perhaps the most fascinating chapter in it is that on "Eternal Recurrence." Nevertheless, though Ouspensky employs here all the formidable resources he can command, he cannot bring the idea home. In the way he presents it, his eternal recurrence simply will not work. If he had suggested that after death, outside chronological time, men might believe (as drowning men are said to believe) that they were living their lives all over again, then that, to use two

of his own favorite terms, would have been a possibility, whereas his eternal recurrence is an impossibility. As soon as changes are introduced, with some men rising and others falling, the exact recurrence of a time is not taking place. The complete repetition, with which he begins, is destroyed by the elaboration of his theory.

What he offers us finally is not recurrence and it is not eternal. Let us say with him that it is easier and easier for Mozart to compose masterpieces and for Napoleon to win battles, because they have been doing it over and over again. But how did they do it the first time? And when was the first time? I am writing these words on a fine Friday morning. How often have I sat at this desk on this particular Friday morning? Is this the 10th, the 100th, the 1000th occasion? In a much later book, The Fourth Way, not written by Ouspensky but made up of transcriptions of questions put to him and his answers, he is far less certain and dogmatic that he is in *A New Model of the Universe*:

> When we think about recurrence, we think that everything repeats, and this is exactly what spoils our approach to it. The first thing to understand about recurrence is that it is not eternal. It sounds absurd, but actually it is so, because it is so different in different cases. Even if we take it theoretically, if we take purely people in mechanical life, even their lives change. Only certain people, in quite frozen conditions of life, have their lives repeating in exactly the same way, maybe for a long time. In other cases, even in ordinary mechanical life, things change. If people are not so definitely governed by circumstances, like great men who have to be great men again and nobody can do anything about it, there are variations, but again not for ever. Never think that anything is for ever. It is a very strange thing, but it seems as though people who have no possibilities, either owing to certain conditions, or to their own insufficient development, or to some pathological state, can have their lives repeating without any particular change, whereas in the case of people with theoretical possibilities, their lives can reach certain points at which they either meet with some possibility of development or they begin to go down. . . .

Nothing is said here, as it was in the earlier book, about ordinary chronological time endlessly repeating itself. With all these changes taking place, this would be impossible. We seem to be concerned with an illimitable number of private times, repetitions and variations of life, removed from history and the time-track of this earth.

I strike a match and when my pipe is alight I put the charred matchstick into the ashtray. Now I can imagine various mental states in which I keep on lighting my pipe and tossing used matches into ashtrays. But—and now I join the scientists on the other side—I cannot believe in a chronological time, no matter how it moves in waves and circles, that restores to my hand the match that has been entirely changed by combustion. That match, like the hand that made use of it or the tobacco it ignited, belongs to irreversible time, entropy time, world time,

actualization-of-one-possibility time. Not all our theorizing, not the grandest conference of esoteric schools and magicians fetched from the remotest of mid-Asian monasteries, can restore the molecules of that match to their original order. Its appearance, yes; its actuality as a physical object, related to other objects, no.

What Ouspensky describes as happening might possibly happen in what we call Time 2. But in Time 1, with which he begins and then conveniently forgets, it could not happen. Ouspensky's originality and his breadth of intellect cannot be denied. These are best displayed, however, not in his theory of an eternal recurrence that is neither eternal nor truly recurrent, but in the chapter rightly entitled "A New Model of the Universe," in which he discovers that Time may be said to be three-dimensional.

One last point. It is true, as Ouspensky points out, that many people cannot help feeling, in certain situations and at odd moments, that all that is happening has happened before. But I for one am not impressed by this as an argument in favor of recurrence. The neurologists can explain some of it, and Dunne, with his theory of precognition and prevision in dreams that we often forget, can explain the rest. And when the argument is from my experience, then a man must speak for himself. My own experience supports Dunne and the neurologists but not Ouspensky. I have never caught myself—and I am fairly adept at catching myself—feeling such a strange sudden familiarity with all that was happening around me that I also felt that this was a life I had already lived, that Time was repeating itself. That may mean, in Ouspensky terms, that I am one of the stupid forgetful types doomed to go round and round writing over and over again that I am one of the stupid forgetful types. It may also mean he was wrong.

3.

I have already mentioned, as one of the teachers of the Work, Maurice Nicoll. Readers who wish to learn how he taught it should read his several large volumes entitled *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, which contain the actual lectures he gave to members of his groups. They can be read with interest even by those who reject their main ideas. Nicoll's early training was entirely scientific and psychological; he took a first in science at Cambridge, went to St. Bartholomew's Hospital (the famous "Bart's"), then pursued his studies in Vienna, Berlin, and Zurich. This was before the First War, in which he served as a medical officer. He met Ouspensky in 1921, and the next year joined Gurdjieff at the Institute at Fontainebleau. Returning to London, he combined a successful practice as a specialist with studying and, from 1931, teaching the Work.

I offer these biographical details to show that a scientific training and background do not forbid a man to reject the conventional idea of Time. Indeed,

Nicoll's *Living Time* is a plea, eloquent and enriched by quotations from a wide range of authors, for our self-deliverance from the domination of "passing time"—a term that I borrowed from Nicoll earlier in this book. There is no attempt to discuss the structure and possible mechanics of Time. Nicoll's approach is psychological and philosophical, as we should expect from his own background and training.

Like the mystics whom he frequently quotes, he insists upon the supremacy of the invisible over the visible, the inner world over the outer, what is discovered by the searching mind over what is revealed to the senses. The tyranny of the idea of passing time allows no broadening and heightening of consciousness. We inhabit a small portion of what he calls "living Time"; it is the belief that only our senses can show us truth that turns all this richness of life into "passing-time and death and destruction."

He goes on: "From other parts of *living Time* we receive a few signals—in literature, architecture, art." All history, he believes, is "a living Today." We are not enjoying one spark of life in a huge dead waste. We are at a point somewhere in the vast procession of the living, still thinking, still feeling, though invisible and unheard. Our little today, which we often see as the summit of progress, is a tiny fraction of Today itself; but we cannot understand this, cannot enjoy the feeling of liberation it brings us, unless "passing-time falls away from us," unless there is a change in our time-sense.

We need to experience (even if only intermittently, from an indefinable direction, from inside not outside) a sense of Now:

> No reveries, no conversations, no tracing out of the meaning of phantasies, contain this now, which belongs to a higher order of consciousness. The time-man in us does not know now. He is always preparing something in the future, or busy with what happened in the past. He is always wondering what to do, what to say, what to wear, what to eat, etc. He anticipates; and we, following him, come to the expected moment and lo, he is already elsewhere, planning further ahead. This is becoming—where nothing ever is. . . . We can only feel now by checking this time-man, who thinks of existence in his own way. Now enters us with a sense of something greater than passing-time. Now contains all time, all the life, and the aeon of the life. Now is the sense of higher space. It is not the decisions of the man in time that count here, for they do not spring from now. All decisions that belong to the life in time, to success, to business, comfort, are about 'tomorrow'. ... It is only what is done in now that counts, and this is a decision always about oneself and with oneself, even though its effect may touch other people's lives 'tomorrow'. Now is spiritual. It is a state of the spirit, when it is above the stream of time-associations. Spiritual values are not in time, and their growth is not a matter of time. To retain the impress of their truth we must fight with time, with every notion that they belong to time, and that the passage of days will increase them. For then it will be easy for us to think it is too late, to make the favourite excuse of passing-time. . . . All insight, all revelation, all illumination, all love, all that is genuine, all that is real, lies in now—and in the attempt to create now we approach the inner precincts, the holiest part of life. For

> in time all things are seeking completion, but in now all things are complete. . . . We must understand that what we call the present moment is not now, for the present moment is on the horizontal line of time, and now is vertical to this and incommensurable with it. . . . If we could awaken, if we could ascend in the scale of reality concealed within us, we would understand the meaning of the 'future' world. *Our true future is our own growth in now, not in the tomorrow of passing-time*.

In fairness to Nicoll, I must add here that the quotations above, taken from the penultimate chapter of his book, refer to ideas he has expounded at some length in earlier chapters. If in these passages he seems vague and given to easy generalizing, then they and I are doing him an injustice. The whole book should be read.

He has a whole chapter on "Recurrence in the Same Time," but nowhere in it is he as certain and emphatic as Ouspensky was on this subject. He quotes Ouspensky without expressing disagreement or even doubt, but he seems halfhearted, perhaps dubious, about the idea of our repeating our lives over and over in passing time. This does not mean that he does not accept some kind of repetition. Indeed, he insists upon it:

> It is difficult to reconcile oneself to the view that a single life determines our lot. We seem to come toward the end of our life just when we begin to get some insight. The illusion of passing-time makes us think that we cannot change the past and that it is not worth while trying to change anything now. We may just begin to realise that we were never taught anything about how we had to live life or about what we really had to do. We probably thought that education taught us how to live, and after a long period of perplexity began to realise that we had to find out things for ourselves. Then it may seem too late. There does not seem to be time for anything and we may easily give up trying to think. The whole impression of the life is a confused one. We do not think we are only beginning something, but merely coming to the end of something. If we believe in a judgment and a hereafter, if we believe that our final lot is determined by this single confused life we have led, the idea seems so inadequate that it tends to make us merely shrug our shoulders and turn aside from all such thoughts. It is surely here that the idea of the repetition of the life necessarily comes in. . . . Can we not realise that we must have a future—that our whole being is constructed to have a future. Without some form of the idea of future how can we understand life, how can we possibly interpret it, save in the most negative way? And why should we confine our idea of the future only to a disembodied state which many of us find difficulty in accepting? Remember that we do not live only in this little visible moment but in a world extended in every direction, visible and invisible.

Living Time was published in 1952, and Nicoll died the following year, so he had put the book together more or less toward the end of his life. So had H. G. Wells when he wrote *Mind at the End of its Tether*, a little volume of concentrated

despair. As I know from his talk, Wells dismissed the kind of thought we find in Nicoll, without ever closely considering it; but his last book is a dark little dead end and there is liberation, there is light, there is hope for us (if we will get rid of our illusions and wrestle with our vanity and folly) in Nicoll's *Living Time*.

What is revealed in it by way of his particular psychological and philosophical approach is rewarding; his account of our slavery to the idea of passing time is of great value; but while he insists upon repetition, saluting Ouspensky with just a suggestion of doubt, he makes little or no attempt (perhaps because he was a sensible man who had not forgotten his early training) to come close to and then examine the multi-dimensional Time in which he certainly believed.

4.

Like Nicoll, Mr. J. G. Bennett was one of the earliest students of Gurdjieff's system, the Work, and later, like Nicoll, taught it to his own groups. But whereas Nicoll had a medical and psychological training, Mr. Bennett is a mathematician and has been a director of industrial research. With two mathematical collaborators, he has produced a Royal Society paper on Unified Field Theory in a curvature-free five-dimensional manifold, which I possess but can only stare at as if I were an Eskimo. (Indeed, there are probably Eskimos now who can begin to understand it better than I can.) Not long after the war he published two books for the general reader—*The Crisis in Human Affairs* and *What Are We Living For?*—which are vigorous and forthright denunciations of various contemporary attitudes of mind, examined in the light of the Work.

And as I write this, he has published the first two volumes of an immensely ambitious opus, *The Dramatic Universe*, being no less than an attempt to bring "all scientific knowledge within the scope of one comprehensive theory of existence." These books, bristling with unfamiliar terms and demanding in places a knowledge of mathematics, are close, hard reading, which I undertook in search of his conclusions about Time. But Mr. Bennett has contributed to Systematics a piece about Time, from which he kindly allowed me to abstract the following. In replying to the question "What is Time?," he begins:

> There is no simple answer. Our experience of temporality is complex and it varies from one situation to another. The variations are so important that we should not speak of time in the singular, but distinguish different times and different kinds of time.
>
> Careful observation shows that time experience comprises three main characters that can vary independently. When such characters can be measured and expressed in numbers they are called parameters and a system with independent parameters is called n-dimensional. We can therefore say that time is three-dimensional. As there are also three dimensions of space, there are in all six dimensions in terms

of which measurable, that is physical, events can be described. My coworkers and I have shown that a six-dimensional geometry will serve to describe not only the movements of bodies, but also other physical situations such as atoms and quanta, and the properties of matter generally.

This raises the question whether, the three kinds of time apply to other situations such as those of life, consciousness and human free-will. To answer this, we must see what the three kinds of time mean in terms of experience. I shall describe them without attempting to prove that the descriptions are either adequate or exhaustive. I have adopted three names for the different forms of time on the principle that the best way of avoiding confusion is to call different things by different names.

TIME. We experience events as successive. This gives rise to the sense of 'before and after'. The present 'exists' and the past and future do not 'exist' or at any rate do so in a different way from the present. If there were no other time but this, existence would be whittled away into an elusive 'present' that is gone as soon as we reach it.

ETERNITY. We are aware of persistence. Without persistence there could be no change—only the meaningless present. Moreover, there is in every situation a potential for a variety of actualizations. Potential does not come and go as does the actual moment. Pure potential is eternal and imperishable. I have called eternity the 'storehouse of potentialities'. This means that there can be many lines of successive time simultaneously present in eternity. Our experience of changes of consciousness gives us a direct confirmation of alternative times. Furthermore, in all living things there is a persisting pattern that directs their development and regulates their lives. It is impossible to make sense of this self-regulating property of life within the limitations of successive time.

HYPARXIS. The simplest approach to the third kind of time is to consider the requirements of freewill and with it of ethics and responsibility. Successive time does not allow choice. Eternity presents us with the choice, but gives us no room to make it. A third degree of freedom is needed to pass from one line of time to another. This leads to the notion of a third kind of time connected in some way with the power to connect or to disconnect potential and actual. To understand fully the importance of the third kind of time, that I have called hyparxis, we must observe that being itself has graduations. We ourselves can be aware of states when we are wholly controlled by causal influences and other states when we can, not only entertain purposes, but deliberate and choose our actions with the aim of realizing them. I call this variable factor the 'ableness-to-be' present in different beings. It can be traced throughout all levels of existence from atoms through the simplest living forms up to man and it is this factor that entitles us to look beyond man to the attainment of superhuman levels. Without this factor everything would be compelled to remain wholly determined by its own eternal pattern.

The three kinds of time are strictly quantitative—that is capable of being measured and expressed in numbers—only in the physical world. They change from quantity as we mount the scale of existence. In terms of our most intimate experiences, even successive time is not measurable. We can travel in eternity: not in our physical bodies but in our consciousness. We can move in hyparxis by an act of will. But although will and consciousness cannot be measured, they are

> elements of our experience no less real than sensations of sight and touch by which we know the physical world. . . .

My guess is that Mr. Bennett would not have reached these valuable conclusions if he had not been so long acquainted with the Work, which offered him both a background and a starting-off place. Yet he is not simply giving us Ouspensky with a different terminology. After leaving that starting-off place, he has made full use, on the way to these conclusions, of his own knowledge and expertise. And I for one am grateful to him.

5.

What did the old Master of the Work, Gurdjieff himself, say about Time when it was not masquerading as the "Merciless Heropass"? Only one thing that has come my way. He said "Time is the unique subjective." I do not propose here to explore the depths of that observation. But we do seem to discover that our experience, on any level, is somehow conditioned by something we have to bring to that experience—something not in it but in us. And that something always begins to look like Time. So perhaps Gurdjieff was right.

Man and Time

J.B. Priestely

Chapter12. One Man and Time

1.

The “one man” in the preceding chapter heading is of course myself. Who else could it be? And this is not egoism. Let me quote what I said in the Introduction: But what is more important is that toward the end of this account of Man and Time any attempt at an objective manner would be impossible. The material offered will be itself deeply subjective, belonging to one man’s inner world of thoughts, feelings, intuitive ideas, vague impressions, belonging in fact to my own personal encounter with Time. This seems to me the only possible conclusion to such a book. . . .

So far I have done what I could to follow and to consider Time in the outer world—though it would be more accurate to say that my subject really consisted of Time effects. But in the end Time must be tracked down in the inner world, and the only inner world I really know is my own. I repeat, then, this is not egoism. To relate myself to Time is the only sensible and honest way in which to end this book. But I do it in the hope that what I discover in my mind many other people will discover in theirs. It is one of the peculiarities of Time that it is intensely private and yet also widely shared. We could put it like this: that superficially, in the world of clocks and watches and appointments, we share Time; then, on a deeper level, it seems intensely private; and then, on a still deeper level, perhaps we begin to share it again, in ways we cannot yet fully understand.

However, before I begin to relate myself to Time, there is a moral challenge that must be met, an ethical obstacle that must be cleared away.

2.

This challenge can be heard in a pronouncement by a distinguished colleague of mine, who often expresses scientific opinion. He mistrusted and disliked theories of Time, he declared, because they appeared to him “a mode of denying the seriousness of the moment.” And here he seems to me wrong—and dangerously wrong. To begin with, the picture he has in the back of his mind—of so many Time theorists dreamily ignoring the passing of the hours—is quite false. The Time theorists I have known have been exceptionally energetic and active-minded persons. They are high above

and not below the average. Nor is it difficult to see why this should be so. It is their Time theories that encourage them to appreciate "the seriousness of the moment." It is their rejection of the conventional idea of Time that helps to give them energy and to keep them active-minded.

Unlike the majority of people nowadays, the Time theorist does not believe that moments flash into our consciousness and then vanish for ever. These moments make up our lives, and it is possible, indeed probable, that we do not deposit what is left of our lives into the grave, all consciousness leaving us for ever during the last moment. If we are not hurrying toward oblivion, if we are shaping a self that will survive death in some form or other, then our existence in passing time, moment by moment, does not become less important but more important. It is the very idea of multiple Time, with each moment existing not only in length but in depth, that brings with it seriousness and a sense of responsibility. And I for one wish to Heaven I had lived with this thought every day of my life.

Nobody can deny that this present age has some extremely ugly features. It has offered us a wide range of nastiness and horror, from dictators ordering millions of innocents into starvation labor camps or gas ovens to teenage city lads amusing themselves kicking old men to death. After despoiling and half-ruining the planet, it has had two world wars and now has plans for a third that would be a man-made Doomsday. Its techniques of mass persuasion are turning men into sheep. And 20th-century urban man is the greatest time waster and time killer this earth has ever known. And in all this global corruption, Time theorists have played no part at all.

But this is not true of the ordinary Time view, the feeling that in the end all our moments add up to nothing, the conviction that our existence is meaningless. It is these that deny "the seriousness of the moment." The moment does not matter because it is only another little step toward final oblivion. No longer is there a Heaven to be won or lost, a Hell to be condemned to; there is nothing. It is all *a tale told by an idiot*. Time is hustling us along to the big sleep.

But what if Time is not as simple as most people now imagine it to be? What if some of the theorists are right? The prospect changes at once, though not all its shades are softer, not all its coloring more harmonious. Suppose we are sentenced not to death, to sleep and forgetting, but to life, to keep on living with ourselves, with what we have been, what we have done? Suppose when we die we rid ourselves only of the world's time, tomorrow's date, but do not escape from our own time and what we have made of it? Feeling sure of oblivion, the suicides put pistols to their heads or ampoules of cyanide between their teeth, to obliterate all consequences of their wickedness or folly; but what if they should find themselves still existing, now without benefit of bullet or poison, and with every consequence still to be faced?

What if a man goes yawning on, losing all curiosity and zest and feeling, just waiting to go to sleep for ever, and then discovers after death that he is still awake, still conscious, in a boredom more gigantic and stifling than ever? What if the people who have filled their lives with suspicion and hatred leave only their bodies in the churchyard, their minds then going wandering through a hell they have created for themselves?

Such things may happen or they may not: Nobody knows. As a Time theorist I think the odds are in favor of something of the sort happening, just because I believe that our consciousness does not entirely exist within passing time and that death does not bring complete oblivion. But the point I wish to make here is that it is utterly unreasonable to accuse Time theories of "denying the seriousness of the moment." They not only do not deny that seriousness, they sharply increase our sense of it: They give the moment depth and significance.

One of my B.B.C. correspondents—the only one out of a thousand or more—took a Freudian view of my concern with Time. (He called it Freudian himself.) He said it was born of an unconscious fear of death. Well, I have never claimed to be an heroic figure, and I certainly share the apprehension of physical catastrophes—high bridges collapsing, airplanes bursting into flames, head-on crashes of cars, and the rest. On the other hand, having been close to death on several occasions, I have experienced that extraordinary sense of detachment, with events going into slow motion, which seems to suggest that part of our being exists in another kind of Time.

And I certainly do not share the notion, common throughout a large area of our civilization, that it is ill-mannered and morbid to mention death at all. I feel that many people now are haunted by a curious combined fear of life-and-death, secretly wishing both of them to be scaled down and drained of all color.

As Nicoll writes in *Living Time:*

> The difficulty is that people do not want to think, to arouse themselves. Even when we are discontented with life we do not want to make the effort of thinking or finding new outlooks. A man wants momentary enjoyment; he does not want to be disturbed; he prefers to cling to the opinions he has, and to make everything as easy as possible for himself. . . . Most of us look for rest at death or annihilation. How often does the physician hear the dying say: I want only rest, oblivion— even among those who have appeared to have held the strongest religious opinions. . . .

This is only to be expected, of course, when a man is weary of struggling against pain and weakness, fighting a battle he feels he must lose. But often long before the last sickbed is reached, there is this longing for rest and oblivion. Once youth has gone, people too often find a mechanical existence, with all its meaningless

pursuits, more trouble than it is worth. This helps to explain their irritation, their angry comments, when any new theory of Time comes their way. Time the great annihilator must not be challenged. They feel it must be left alone to do its work on them. These people do not want any more life; they feel they have had more than enough already.

I hope the reader will now agree with me that whatever Time theories may be, they are most certainly not "a mode of denying the seriousness of the moment." A wide reading of books and correspondence has convinced me that Time theorists are just as likely to disagree as to agree with one another. But I think they share two convictions. One is that the moment is more serious than most people imagine it to be. The other is that the conventional idea of Time, limiting and enslaving us to passing time, is not only wrong but evil in its power to corrupt us.

Once the mind is freed it likes to strike out for itself, so that I know even now that I am not likely to impose upon many readers my own particular view of Time, just because they will soon have views of their own; but if I have helped to liberate them from this bad idea, still dominating our age, I shall not have written in vain. But, in order to approach my own particular view of time, I must offer a little personal history.

3.

Even as a child I could never understand why certain things that were important to me appeared to older people to be nothing. My dreams were nothing. What I "made up" to delight or terrify myself was nothing. Certain queer feelings, coming out of the blue, were nothing. I can remember, though it must be all of 65 years ago, sitting in the sun on a tiny hillock at the back of our house, and feeling, not lightly but to the very depths of my being, that I was close to some secret about a wonderful treasure, which had no size, no shape, no substance, but all the same was somewhere just behind the sunlight and the buttercups and daisies and the grass and the warm earth. And this too, it seemed, was nothing. I was surrounded and often enchanted, it appeared, by nothings.

And it is true that as I grew up these nothings, once so filled with wonder and terror and joy, did fade and retreat, though never entirely leaving my mind. What happened, of course, was that I had to submit my mind to the pressure of dominating ideas; I was taught to look at life properly, on my way up to becoming a level-headed fellow.

This looking at life properly, with no nonsense about you, and becoming a level-headed fellow, might be compared to attendance at a rather strange movie theatre. In there you are told to concentrate entirely upon the images shown on the screen. These are your world, your life. What is not shown on the screen—yet once again—is nothing. But you cannot help feeling that there is something else, not on the screen. Perhaps you hear a voice that is not coming from there and is much closer to your ear. You seem to catch a glimpse of a face that is not a screen image. There are whispers and movements in the dark. Apparently there is a life all around you, not like the clear and ordered imagery of the screen—a life fragmentary, mysterious, only to be guessed at, but somehow suggesting a fullness and richness of living not to be found, in the existence of the lighted images.

Indeed, this screen existence is beginning to seem repetitive and tedious; but one of its hollow-brass voices, probably coming from a machine, tells you not to be impatient, says that you have only to wait, taking care not to addle your wits with nothings, and soon what the screen will show you will be wonderful. But if you listen hard, another voice, low-pitched, quiet, so close that it might be inside your head, whispers that what you are being told with such authority and complacency is nonsense, that the life around you in front of the screen is real and enduring, and that your nothings have always been *something*.

And then you must make a choice: You can become a sound level-headed fellow, still yawning at the screen and asking when it will all be wonderful, or a bit of a crackpot who somehow keeps on being cheerful and interested.

All that of course would involve other matters besides Time. But Time will do very well as a test. Reduce it to a single line, then almost everything that seems to add richness, depth, and meaning to your mind and to your life becomes a nothing. Or if not a nothing, then a something that a physician or a psychiatrist can rub out, to bring you into the standard pattern of acceptance, boredom, frustration. Now long before I had considered any evidence for precognition and the rest, long before I had read anything about multi-dimensional Time, I had felt a strong resistance to the idea of our being entirely contained by passing time. It was like being forced into a mental strait-jacket. To accept the idea was to reject thoughts and feelings that, however vague they might be, seemed to light up and liberate the mind. The “facts” might favor passing time, might dismiss any appeal from it; but then I did not really believe in these “facts,” though in truth I had never carefully considered them.

What I did believe is that we knew nothing for certain, and that it was better to live between gay tapestries of half-beliefs and fancies than between the iron walls of “facts” that might not even be true. I preferred indulging my fancy to the risk of finally disinheriting my imagination. So I half-believed in a good deal of nonsense,

and I still have some notebooks of my teens to prove it. All this was before the First War, when I was a junior clerk in the Yorkshire wool trade. Some of my more fantastic half-beliefs, I suspect, were there to defy the wool trade. But then I left it, in 1914, to join the army as an infantryman.

Life in the infantry on the Western Front was capable of squeezing and hammering all the nonsense and fancifulness out of a man. If living hard and dangerously tests a man's notions, then mine were severely tested. So what remained was something quite different from those prewar half-beliefs and fancywork. There was, for example, the feeling (without any theory attached to it) that on some occasions we slipped out of passing time, became detached observers of our fortunes, with death approaching in slow motion, as if we were in some other time. Then again, there were those men, lively gossipers and wags, who became subdued and thoughtful some hours before the sniper's bullet found them or the shell tore their bodies to bleeding shreds—as if they had been watching, throughout a whole morning, death pointing a finger at them across No Man's Land. These men's familiar moods changed completely, we might say, because at the back of their minds a *Now* had opened hugely so that it was already darkened by an event that was to take place, in passing time, some hours afterward.

And this does not contradict and cancel out that sudden detachment at the high point of danger that others of us felt, as if we looked on from some other time. True, our *Now* narrowed to the finest possible point, and then opened out, to set things seemingly in slow motion, into another time. The difference—and a difference that perhaps cannot be fully explored by the human intellect—was that these men were going to die and we were going to live.

In this strange region, far removed from ordinary routine existence and its prevailing ideas, a region of hard living and danger and death, I noticed then, though without understanding them, that Time played many tricks. It refused to be true to form. It did not adapt itself to the "facts." And often since then I have noticed that men who have long learned and taught in some such hard school, where you may put up your hand once too often and bring the roof down, are generally averse to positivist certainties about what is fact and what is illusion. Nearly always these men believe we know less than we think we do, and do not care if more advanced thinkers consider them credulous.

Perhaps they are; but then again perhaps in jungles and deserts, on high seas and battlefields, they have seen the certainties fade, the facts turn awkward, and Time play its tricks.

When I returned from the war, and then during the earlier 1920s, I renewed and eagerly enlarged my acquaintance with literature and the arts. With the new novelists —soon to take his place in my mind at the head of them— came Proust, of all novelists the one most deeply concerned with Time, who could declare that the creative part of his being "found itself in the only setting in which it could exist and enjoy the essence of things, that is, outside Time." (By which of course he meant passing time, the fourth dimension, Time One.) And then I began to discover that the contemplation of certain pictures, if sufficiently rapt, seemed to bring about in me a curious Time-shift, so that I appeared to myself to stand and stare at them in some timeless region. This was all the more curious because in those days, for various personal reasons, I felt often desperately hard-pressed, working very long hours to pay my way.

Moreover, because I was by temperament eager and impatient, then and later I was an easy victim of passing time, jumping in imagination from one promising occasion to the next (often expecting so much that I robbed myself of any satisfaction) and mentally shoveling away as if they were muck the days between—a bad habit from which I have freed myself only during the last 10 years. So perhaps I denounce the domination of passing time with all the more heat because I have suffered from it myself.

Nevertheless, and in spite of the double pressure of circumstances and my own temperament, even in those years certain works of art seemed to have the power of taking me out of passing time into a spell of timeless entrancement. I am anxious not to exaggerate either the frequency or the force of this power. The entrancement was there, however, bringing with it a *different taste of Time*. Moreover, this could happen outside any appreciation of art. Ordinary life sometimes had this power, as I noted years ago in a chapter of autobiography. For want of a better term I called these particular experiences, even though they had no direct connection with art, "the aesthetic feeling," not because they were associated with beauty, though they were not without beauty, but because they were obviously dissociated from the limitations and pressures and self-centeredness of ordinary existence, and I saw the world as an artist must often see it. This experience, I imagine, cannot be uncommon.

Here is an example. Though I have now forgotten in what city I was, I remember coming to a halt outside a fine large fish shop. As I stared at the scales and fins and the round eyes, looking indignant even in death, I lost myself and all sense of passing time in a vision of fishiness itself, of all the shores and seas of the world, of the mysterious depths and wonder of oceanic life. This vision was not in any way related to myself: My ego was lost in it. And real poets, I suppose, must always be enjoying such selfless and timeless visions. They came to me only rarely: It might be from the sight of something, like those fishes gleaming on the marble, or after I had heard somebody merely say "France" or "Italy," or from simply reading the words

"eighteenth century"; but they brought me at once a feeling for the immense variety, richness, and wonder of life on this earth. This feeling was deep and joyful but did not belong to ecstatic mystical experience, though it was nearly as far removed from the flat and stale acceptance of everything we find among so many people now.

I felt there was some sort of Time shift, even in those days. Compelled to explain what I felt, I might have said then that I seemed to pass from one kind of experience with a certain temporal effect to another and quite different kind of experience with another and quite different temporal effect. What I did not understand then was that there might be more than states of mind involved here, that there really are different orders of times within Time itself, that our consciousness dwells among many dimensions.

As I said earlier, Dunne's *Experiment with Time* came out in 1927, and as I had it to review I read it very carefully. But for some reason or other (possibly because I had decided to write at least two long novels), though I was fascinated by Dunne's book it did not arouse in me an immediate interest in the Time problem. What it did do—and this happened to many, perhaps most, of its readers—was to make me increasingly conscious of my dream life. Though I never in fact adopted the notebook method he urged upon his readers, I did begin to remember, sometimes in detail, more and more of my dreams. This was fortunate because as I entered the middle 1930s I began to have some extraordinary powerful dreams, a few of which I described in print.

These middle 1930s were my own early 40s, a climacteric period when, as Jung has so often pointed out, a man must face squarely the second half of his life, which should have an entirely different character from that of the first half. I was then beginning to read Jung, whose theory of the collective unconscious seemed to me—as it still seems to me—one of the great liberating ideas of this age. And it was not long before I was dividing such close attention as I could spare from my work—then making great demands upon me, especially in the theatre—between Jung and the Time problem, always regretting that this division was necessary. If Jung had given as much of himself to Time as he did to alchemy, I am certain that this book, if still necessary at all, would have been much easier to write.

Now I must say something about my plays, not because some of them have been called "Time plays" but because they involved me in a Time shift very different from the one I had known earlier. I shall be as brief as possible but some explanation is necessary here. During this period I wrote both comedies and serious plays. Contrary to general opinion, it was the comedies that took me far longer to write and demanded far more conscious effort. After some preliminary pondering over their characters, I wrote almost all the more important serious plays at a furious speed,

without making any scenario or elaborate notes, and with little or no conscious effort. For example, *Dangerous Corner, Time and the Conways, An Inspector Calls, The Linden Tree,* were written in 10 days at the most, probably within a week. Their most difficult acts, those bristling with technical problems, demanded no more effort than the others (and later were rehearsed and played with only a few words changed); and I might have been writing letters to friends.

The sheer speed of composition made any conscious appreciation and solution of the technical problems involved quite impossible. Looking at them afterward, I felt like a man watching himself run at a headlong pace across a mine field. And experience played little or no part in all this: *Dangerous Corner* was my very first play. Moreover, between these headlong pieces, I was quite capable, working slowly and making an effort, of writing very faulty or even abortive plays. Yet out of the four pieces of furious creation named above, the first three have been played more often and in more different countries than any of the 20-odd other plays I have written; and the fourth, *The Linden Tree,* less likely to be understood abroad, was an instantaneous success with the English audience for which it was written.

In spite of this astounding speed of composition, it did not occur to me then that any Time element was involved. With Jung's theories in mind, I felt that the hard work in this apparently effortless playwriting had somehow been done in and by the unconscious, which had then broken through and taken charge and used my conscious mind simply as a transcribing instrument. So it did not occur to me that there was any Time element in this almost magical creation—for however modest its results may have been in terms of world drama, it was almost magical to me.

But now I see that we cannot rule out Time, which has its own relation to the unconscious. We know that on one level the unconscious is capable of keeping an eye on chronological time for us, waking us if necessary at any hour we choose. But this is not its own time. It refuses to accept, when it is about its own business and not acting as an alarm clock, our whole idea of temporal succession. Its time order is not ours, as Jung himself pointed out to me, some years later than this playwriting period, when I had some talks with him. He himself, I felt then, wanted to keep clear of the Time problem, though afterward he may be said to have challenged conventional and positivist opinion with his curious, fascinating, if rather obscure essay on *Synchronicity.* I call this essay a challenge because the "acausal connecting principle" it suggests (after showing us some astonishing groups of "coincidences") can hardly be compressed within a uni-dimensional linear time.

There were then these two different kinds of experience, only alike in appearing to suggest some sort of Time-shift and in releasing the mind from an egocentric relation with passing time. In all other respects they were so different that it is hard to

believe that any one order, relating either to Time or to states of consciousness, could contain them both. Whether it came at moments of great danger, in contemplating works of art, or with "the aesthetic feeling" about certain aspects of life, the first kind of experience put things into slow motion, detached my consciousness from passing time, and transformed me while it lasted into an almost selfless observer, existing outside any sphere of action.

The second kind of experience did not withdraw me from action but flung me into it, did not turn me into a detached observer but into a creator working like a man possessed, lending me energy and imagination and a creative will. But I write "me" for convenience; actually in this experience there is an absence of any feeling of self; and if some spirit, not a member of the Society of Authors, claimed this writing I would feel no resentment.

We have here then two fundamentally different kinds of experience. They belong to different states of consciousness. But there is also a Time element here. They are alike in appearing to be outside passing time. But my mind seemed to make its escape from passing time, so to speak, in two quite different directions. In one there was room for contemplative inaction; in the other there were possibilities of the most rapid and decisive action. (This would not be true if I were not by choice and profession a writer, to whom writing is essentially "action.") And for my part— and, after all, they were *my* experiences, and any critical Dr. Brown or dubious Professor Smith may never have known them—I cannot detach their difference and their value from their Time character.

Time seems to divide itself into times here. There is one for passing time; there is another for the first kind of experience, the contemplative slower-up; there is another for the second kind of experience, the purposeful, imaginative, creative speeder-up: three times. So can it be true to say that nothing in our actual experience suggests—if we want to be geometrical about it—that there might be three dimensions of Time? I say it cannot be true. I will agree that no exact analysis may be possible, that no sharp lines can be drawn, that all except one's innermost feeling is blurred and shadowy, that the relation between consciousness and the unconscious may complicate the issue; but I cannot escape the feeling that Time, itself so blurred and vague and elusive, divides itself into three to match these different modes of consciousness. We are at least entitled to say that it is *as if* there are three kinds of time. (And this is hardly an impudent claim when Time itself, on close examination, can be turned into an *as if,* even though we have in this age transformed it into a ball-and-chain to keep the spirit a prisoner.)

At the risk of appearing to put myself too close to Dunne, I propose to call these three times—time One, time Two, and time Three. To follow some theorists and call time Two "eternity," a term rich in associations, would only mislead and confuse many readers. Again, though it would not be difficult to invent a name for time Three —like Mr. Bennett's "Hyparxis"—some of us are easily repelled by unfamiliar terms. So let us make do with times One, Two, and Three, remembering that we live in all three of them at once, though we may not enjoy, so to speak, equal portions of them.

As visible creatures of earth we are ruled by time One. We are born into it, grow up and grow old in it, and die in it. Our brains have developed through eons into marvelous instruments of time-One attention. Not only do they bring to our notice almost everything we feel we ought to know, but they are able to exclude what might be bewildering and unhelpful. When drugs interfere with their chemistry, some of their inhibiting processes do not work, and then we might see a chair as a Van Gogh might see it, not as a furniture salesman and a customer might see it. (The Time-shift in drug experiences is well attested; they free consciousness from its age-old concentration upon time One.)

Our relation through the brain with time One tends to be practical and economic, good for our matter-handling business, which helps to explain why we are now great time-One people and mostly try not to believe in anything else. If this limited belief were imposed on people as a dogma, as it easily might be in totalitarian or severely conformist societies, it is not merely fanciful to suggest that men might become automata, ruled by better machines than themselves.

There are signs, however, of a reaction against this time-One dogma. Many of them have come my way since I began writing this book. Not all the forms this reaction takes are acceptable. One that is acceptable, concerned with all the extra-sensory perception phenomena, ESP at work, which only sheer bigotry can deny now, seems to me outside the scope of this inquiry. But as we have seen already, even though we ignore all manner of examples of premonition and *deja vu* experiences, there are plenty of authenticated precognitive dreams to prove that our minds cannot be entirely contained within time One. So let us take an early example of the precognitive dream, one connected with an historical event, and see what we can make of it in terms of more times than One.

Three months before Napoleon invaded Russia, the wife of General Toutschkoff had a dream that was repeated a second and then a third time in one night. In this dream she was in an inn she had never seen before, in some town she did

not know, and her father came into the room, leading her small son by the hand, and told her in broken tones that her happiness was at an end because her husband had fallen at Borodino. She awoke in great distress, roused her husband, and asked him where Borodino was. But when they looked for the name on the map, they could not find it. (The battle in fact took its name from an obscure village.) After it was fought, everything happened as in the three dreams: She found herself in the same room in the same inn in the same town, and her father came in with her son and announced her husband's death at Borodino, where he was commanding the army of the reserve.

More or less following Dunne here, we can say that the dreaming self of Countess Toutschkoff, in time Two, revealed what would happen to her in time One. Though a soldier's wife might always be haunted by the fear that her husband might be killed in battle, coincidence must be ruled out of her three dreams because what happened was identical in so many different particulars and that the very name afterward given to the battle was then unknown to her. If no part of her mind could escape from time One, then the whole matter remains inexplicable.

Another Time order, which we can call time Two, does at least offer us a possible explanation. But what about the historical event, the Battle of Borodino? Are we to assume that before Napoleon's army crossed the Niemen on June 24, the Battle of Borodino on September 7, 1812 was already waiting to take its place in history? And if it was not, as we cannot help feeling, if all depended on the calculations of the French and Russian general staffs and the consequences of various minor battles and skirmishes, then where did the dreamer's mind, wandering in time Two, discover this unknown name Borodino? If in our instinctive dislike of the idea of a fixed unalterable future, we declare that early in June 1812, when the Countess dreamed her three dreams, events that were to take place in September did not exist in any possible shape or form, then how could she dream as she did? And if we accept her precognition, and with it the idea that this was an experience in time Two, impossible in time One, then how do we avoid the fixed future, the Borodino already in its place further along the track of time One?

Before I try to answer these questions, let us return to the dream of the American mother about the visit to the creek and the dead baby:

> Many years ago when my son, who is now a man with a baby a year old, was a boy I had a dream early one morning. I thought the children and I had gone camping with some friends. We were camped in such a pretty little glade on the shores of the sound between two hills. It was wooded, and our tents were under the trees. I looked around and thought what a lovely spot it was.
>
> I thought I had some washing to do for the baby, so I went to the creek where it broadened out a little. There was a nice clean gravel spot, so I put the baby and the clothes down. I noticed I had forgotten the soap so I started back to the tent. The

baby stood near the creek throwing handfuls of pebbles into the water. I got my soap and came back, and my baby was lying face down in the water. I pulled him out but he was dead. I awakened then, sobbing and crying. What a wave of joy went over me when I realized that I was safe in bed and that he was alive. I thought about it and worried for a few days, but nothing happened and I forgot about it.

During that summer some friends asked the children and me to go camping with them. We cruised along the sound until we found a good place for our camp: near fresh water. The lovely little glade between the hills had a small creek and big trees to pitch our tents under. While sitting on the beach with one of the other women watching the children play one day, I happened to think I had some washing to do, so I took the baby and went to the tent for the clothes. When I got back; to the creek I put down the baby and the clothes, and then I noticed that I had forgotten the soap. I started back for it, and as I did so, the baby picked up a handful of pebbles and threw them in the water. Instantly my dream flashed into my mind. It was like a moving picture. He stood just as he had in my dream—white dress, yellow curls, shining sun. For a moment I almost collapsed. Then I caught him up and went back to the beach and my friends. When I composed myself, I told them about it. They just laughed and I said I imagined it. That is such a simple answer when one cannot give a good explanation. I am not given to imagining wild things.

After describing that dream, I said that if we accepted it, we must also accept one of two things:

We must believe that up to the moment when the mother leaves the baby to go and fetch the soap, the dream is showing her the future, but that her return to find the baby drowned is a dramatization of not unusual maternal anxiety: the dream being therefore part-future, part-fiction. *Or* we must believe that a future containing a dead baby is *changed,* by the mother's action, into a future in which the baby does not die and lives to become a father himself: so that of two possibilities, one by deliberate intervention has come to be actualized. This leaves us with a future already existing so that it can be discovered by one part of the mind, and with a future that can be shaped by the exercise of our free will. We cannot have both, we shall be told; it must be either one or the other. Possibly, possibly not.

It may be remembered that I offered a similar alternative after an account of a motorist who dreamed that he knocked down a small boy and then, a few weeks afterward, had to swerve and brake violently to avoid hitting a small boy whom he immediately recognized, after getting out of his car, as the child he saw in his dream. I said that this dream could be part prevision, part fiction, or that it could show a possibility never actualized because the driver, forewarned by the dream, was able to act promptly at the right moment, changing the future seen in his dream.

In both instances, then, we are left with a choice: between a dream that only in part reveals the future and a dream entirely concerned with the future—but a future

that is not fixed and inevitable, that can be changed. Let us consider the latter first. We are asked to accept a future that exists in some form or other, because it can be experienced in a dream, and yet may possibly be changed. Thinking theoretically, we feel inclined to reject at once any such idea of the future. Either the future is an "uncreated nothing" or it is wholly there, waiting for us to experience it. But this is only what we think in terms of Time theory.

In our ordinary thinking, outside theory and well inside practical living, not only do we not reject this idea of a half-made future, consisting of possibilities that may or may not be actualized—that is, becoming part of our and the world's physical history—but we accept it so wholeheartedly that it shapes and colors our thought. When we think of the next 12 months we regard them neither as a blank nothing nor as some inflexible series of events. These extreme alternatives belong to theory, not to our actual practice, in which we do not hesitate to steer a course between them.

It is this intellectually infuriating future, rather like an omelette just before it is ready to be lifted out, that we hold in our minds when we are actually planning our lives and not picking and choosing among Time theories. Certainly an H-bomb missile may arrive and blow us all out of time One, but we are well aware of that, know that it is one of the possibilities that may be actualized. That missile, we may say, is waiting to be sent on its dreadful errand, to mark a high point of human folly; but it has been put together by man's will and action and it can be outlawed and destroyed by man's will and action. The future cannot be nothing, for it contains immediately, among other things, that missile; but neither is it fixed and inevitable, for it can be changed even after it has seemed to reveal itself in dreams and time Two.

> The most vivid and outstanding experience that has ever occurred to me, was one night I woke up in a cold sweat absolutely sure that I had knocked down a small boy with my car. This dream remained with me for two or three days afterwards, but eventually, as all things do, it was put to the back of my mind. It was only a few weeks afterwards, when driving into Manchester, that I had to swerve and brake violently to avoid an accident. I jumped out of the car, and was staggered when I immediately recognized the boy as being the same child as in my dream. . . . I did not hit the boy, but was only inches away from hitting him, which thankfully proved one aspect of the dream wrong.

It is then not at all outrageous to suggest that these two dreamers saw a future that existed in some shape or other (notice how we like saying, with Wells, "The shape of things to come") and yet could be dramatically changed by a sudden act of will—the picking up of the baby, or the swerving and braking of the car. After all, it is far closer to our common working idea of the future—half-made, half-there, not wholly made or wholly there—than any conclusions of the scientists or the

philosophers. We have in these dreams possibilities that were actualized— namely, the visit to the creek, the encounter with the boy on the road—and possibilities that were prevented from being actualized—namely, the drowning of the baby, the knocking down of the boy. (With the Borodino dream, of course, everything was actualized, probably because an event on that scale, a great battle, is fixed beyond intervention.)

Now in time Two, where the dreams belong, there is no distinction between the possibilities that are actualized and those that are not. The creek and the road are there, and so are the drowned baby and the knocked-down boy. In time One, action can be taken so that what we might call the line of history avoids the drowned baby, the injured boy. But that is all. The alternative possibilities, together with the choice between them, cannot exist in time One. Nor did they exist in time Two. Therefore another time is necessary, time Three.

If we think of this line of material history really as a line, then as one possibility is actualized and others are not, this line cannot move up and down in two dimensions but must curve around in three. So on this theory of the two dreams we can accept Ouspensky's "The three-dimensionality of time is completely analogous to the three-dimensionality of space" and J. G. Bennett's "This leads to the notion of a third kind of time connected in some way with the power to connect or disconnect potential and actual." And certainly, taking the baby away from the creek, swerving and braking to avoid the small boy on the road, may be said to be disconnecting potential and actual.

I refuse to answer questions, however, about these possibilities in time Three, these shapes of possible things to come, which can be seen in time Two and yet, until actualized, are outside our material history in time One. I refuse to answer because I do not know. Nobody should be surprised by this confession. After all I do not know, can only hazard a guess, how the sight of a picture or even the sound of a word could suddenly seem to change the tempo and tone of my existence, apparently taking me out of one time and enclosing me within another. I do not know, and again can only hazard a guess, how I came to write, let us say, the technically complicated Act Two of *Time and the Conways* seemingly without effort and at a headlong pace. All that is within my sure knowledge is that these things happened. But then every other day something happens that a positivist would call a coincidence and that I feel is nothing of the sort, though I cannot explain it. I am old enough now to realize how little I do know.

Let us see now what happens—and here I have little more advance information than the reader has—when we reject the idea that these dreams were entirely concerned with the future, but a future that could be changed. We put in its place the idea that these dreams were, as I said earlier, part-future, part-fiction. The visit to the creek with the baby, in the dream, is a genuine time-Two glimpse of the future, but

the tragic episode of the baby's death does not belong to the future but is, as I said, "a dramatization of not unusual maternal anxiety," the kind of thing most women cannot help imagining.

In the same way, that section of road and the small boy on it were there in the future, seen by the dreamer in time Two; but projected into the scene, out of the motorist's constant anxiety about accidents, was the imaginary episode of injuring the boy. In these terms the future remains unchanged; all that happens is that what was imagined did not take place in reality. And at first sight this seems a much neater and more sensible explanation.

After reflection, however, this explanation leaves me feeling dissatisfied. The questions that seem to vanish have merely been swept away like crumbs and ash under a rug. Anxiety dreams are common enough; most of us have wakened to remember vaguely those dream airplanes and trains that will not be caught because taxis break down and luggage is mislaid. But in these two dreams there is no such dim confusion. As in most precognitive dreams, everything is sharp and clear, so vivid that it is easily remembered. And there does not appear to have been any break, any change of quality, between what was previsionary, disclosing the scene and the situation, and what belonged to a dramatized anxiety. The dead baby seems to have been as convincing as the live baby.

However, I do not wish to attack the theory from this position, if only because so much is possible in dreams, those vast private theatres in which we are dramatists, directors, designers, actors, and audience. (Long before I was interested in precognition, before I had read any depth psychology, I could not understand why so many people thought their dreams no more important than their sneezes and yawns. Our dreams are our night life.) I will suppose it to be true that a dream can move smoothly from prevision or precognition, from what is revealed, not created, to this familiar acting out of an anxiety or constant fear. Nevertheless, I am still left feeling dissatisfied.

Certainly we have now dodged the future that can be experienced and yet changed, and those possibilities that may or may not be actualized. It is much easier to say that something was imagined—such as the death of the baby—that did not subsequently take place in reality. It is easier still if we assume, as so many people seem to do, that the imagination and all its creations are nothing. But this will not do, for these are very much *something,* and something of immense importance to our lives. (What if we should finally arrive, a long way beyond death, at a mode of existence that remained nothing but a huge blank unless the imagination went to work on it, creating for it landscapes, cities, dwellings, gardens, arts, and social life?)

Because most children are highly imaginative, it is supposed by some that to reach maturity we ought to leave imagination behind, like the habit of smearing our faces with jam or chocolate. But an adult in whom imagination has withered is mentally lame and lopsided, in danger of turning into a zombie or a murderer. It is the creative imagination that has given our ruthless blood-thirsty species its occasional gleams of nobility, its hope of rising above the muck it spreads.

To discover what we make of imagination I am consulting the nearest *Dictionary of Philosophy,* an unambitious American work, usefully modest in size. It says:

> Imagination designates a mental process consisting of: (a) The revival of sense images derived from earlier perceptions (the reproductive imagination), and (b) the combination of these elementary images into new unities (the creative or productive imagination). The creative imagination is of two kinds: (a) the fancy which is relatively spontaneous and uncontrolled, and (b) the constructive imagination, exemplified in science, invention and philosophy which is controlled by a dominant plan or purpose.

To which I feel I must reply: (a) that there is here a smell of the cobbler's "Nothing like leather"; (b) that I should like to read the comments of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Blake on this account of imagination; (c) that the enduring vitality, say, of Don Quixote and Hamlet, apparently the products of uncontrolled fancy, is not easy to explain along these lines; and (d) that if this can be taken as a representative statement, then we know and care very little about imagination. It really belongs to the invisible nothing department.

Because imagination appears to be free of the limitations we know in time One, we think of it as being outside Time. It is there, however, that the nothings begin. We might do better if we thought of it as belonging to a different Time order, to another time. And I have already suggested, after remembering my own experience, that imaginative creation seems to imply not a second time order, contemplative and detached from action, but a third, in which purpose and action are joined together and there seems to be an almost magical release of creative power.

If there is a part of the mind or a state of consciousness that is outside the dominion of time One and time Two but is governed by a time Three, then that is where the creative imagination has its home and does its work. And it may be that there imagination is not something escaping from reality but *is itself reality,* while the world we construct from our time-One experience is regarded there as something artificial, abstract, thin, and hollow.

Now what belonged to the time-One future in these two dreams, the baby at the creek, the small boy on the road, could only be observed in the wide but badly focused present (compare Dunne) of time Two. This is what the dreamers are attending to, being asleep and incapable of concentrating their attention in time One. Now we are still assuming that the main incidents of the dreams, the death of the deserted baby, the running-down of the small boy, are not part of the future revealed in time Two. These tragic incidents have been neatly introduced into the dreams, perhaps to serve as warnings, by the dreamers hastily dramatizing familiar anxieties. Thus the set and the characters are provided by future experience, but the action comes out of imagination. This is all very curious, but it is what we must accept on this theory of the dreams.

And Time cannot be left out, because we know the future is involved; and if Time is in, then it cannot be uni-dimensional, for we need another and different time, a time Two, to explain how the future came to be revealed. But this will not explain what we have already assumed: the sudden change in the character of the dreams, the switchover from prevision to imagination, the dramatic intervention of the dreamer's anxieties and fears.

In which time order did imagination come to intervene? Not in time One, which is closed down for the night. Not in time Two, which is concerned with the time-One future and is providing the baby at the creek and the small boy on the road. The dramas, the warning strokes of the imagination, which will eventually produce decisive actions in time One, must belong neither to time One nor time Two but to time Three. So, though by a very different route, we arrive again at that third dimension of Time.

Nevertheless, I prefer the other explanation of these dreams, which does not see them as a mixture of prevision and imagination (even though we do not know what imagination is) but as glimpses of a future already shaped but still pliable, yielding—in these instances, though obviously not in many others—to will and action. It is as if ahead of us in time One were shapes, molds, patterns, possibilities, seen as definite events in certain of our dreams; and into some of these shapes, molds, patterns, there arrives the material substance that actualizes them, hardening them into world history. There is an idea not unlike this in Blake's *Jerusalem,* in which *Los* (the name is *Sol* reversed) can be taken as the symbolic figure of Time:

All things acted on Earth are seen in the bright Sculptures of
Los's Halls, & every Age renews its powers from these Works
With every pathetic story possible to happen from Hate or
Wayward Love; & every sorrow & distress is carved here,
Every Affinity of Parents, Marriages & Friendships are here

In all their various combinations wrought with wondrous Art,
All that can happen to Man in his pilgrimage of seventy years. . . .

These "Sculptures," as Maurice Nicoll suggested, can be regarded as states of mind from which men cannot free themselves; but they can also be seen as the possibilities, like the Borodino of the Countess's dream, that must be actualized. They are that part of the future that is fixed. But much of it, close to us as individuals, is only half-made, depending for its historical time-One shape and character on a number of personal decisions.

This brings us to the questions I asked at the end of the chapter "The Dreams." There, after pointing out that more than 90 per cent of the precognitive dreams I was sent were concerned with the terrible or the trivial, I asked why the dreaming self so rarely catches a glimpse of that wide middle range of our activities and interests. And now we can reply that within this range there may so often be no determined future, only a confusion of possibilities still to be actualized, waiting to receive their time-One shape and character from will and action. Both the terrible and the trivial are nearly always outside our control—the deaths and disasters because they are too big and fateful, the trivia because they are too small and unimportant. So that it is they in nine cases out of 10, at least, that will be revealed in precognitive dreams because they are there to be revealed. These possibilities are part of the future that will not be changed, either because they are out of reach of our will or beneath its attention and interest.

Along this line we can now approach the FIP (future-influencing-present) effect. Why did my friend Dr. A feel a queer excitement when he received impersonal official reports from Mrs. B, then completely unknown to him? His consciousness in time One knew nothing about her. No dreams from time Two visited him. But in time Three they had already fallen in love and were married. This deep relationship, for some reason I cannot supply, was not a possibility but a certainty, but only in that remoter part of his being—if I may be allowed the phrase—involved with time Three, able to communicate nothing to his time-One consciousness but this queer feeling of excitement.

This is no doubt an exceptional instance, but what is not at all rare, at least in my experience, is a state of mind suddenly and inexplicably illuminated or darkened by feelings apparently coming from nowhere and entirely unconcerned with what we are doing, thinking, feeling, in our time-One existence. This last rightly demands most of our attention, but we must not make the mistake of assuming that anything not explicable in time-One terms is a nothing. It may be a very important something, like the excitement that Dr. A felt, the distant trumpets heralding the most rewarding relationship of his life. We should think a man a fool if he insisted upon meeting all his

time-One experience with half-closed eyes and with wax pads over his ears. But we shall not be very much wiser if, to prove too narrow a theory, we try to keep our minds closed to what might be revealed to them in times Two and Three. In this way we could impoverish our experience both on this side of the grave and then beyond it.

I have lately received, from Italy, some material based on the findings and theorizing of a small newish international group of medical psychologists. This restored to me a term much used before the First War, when I first began to read about and discuss such matters, but one I have rarely seen or heard since then: This is the "superconscious." On this theory the ego and its field of consciousness occupies a middle place between the unconscious, personal or collective, and the superconscious, the source of our nobler feelings, intuitions and inspiration, genius, illumination, and ecstasy.

And if we relate this division to our temporal system here, we could say that the ego and its field of consciousness belong to time One, the unconscious to time Two, the superconscious to time Three. But we must remember there are no separate compartments and exact divisions, and that we live, even here and now, in all three times. This still remains true even of those people who deny the possibility of any experience outside time One. However, it may not always be true, for if we insist upon disinheriting ourselves, men may ultimately become time-One slaves or automata.

5.

I have said that we go beyond the grave. But in one sense and strictly speaking, we do not. Indeed, it is the idea of a time-One existence persisting after death that has worked so much mischief. It has helped to create some of the dreariest fantasies ever known, with the spirits of departed Red Indians arriving in South London basements to establish communications between this world and the next. It has so repelled many people that they proclaim with passion that long before the doctor has signed his certificate we shall be dead as mutton. The truth is, we are apt to be immodest in both our claims and our denials here: Either we live for ever or perish with our last heartbeat. I think it reasonable to suggest we do neither. We are not demigods and we are not cattle.

We cannot go beyond the grave in time One. When we die we come to the end of our allotment of time One. The brain ceases to supply us with any further information because it stops working, dying with the body that housed it. We have to take our leave of chronological world time. We move out of history: *Thou thy worldly task hast done, Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.*

But where is home, and what are our wages? In terms of our argument here, we can say that home is our continued existence in time Two and that our wages, there for us to spend in that existence, are our total experience in time One. This has an end just as it had a beginning in time One; we go jogging along that world line until death appears as a terminus; but in time Two we have never been making that journey and, as we have seen, have never been bound by its conditions. There may be some kind of death awaiting us ultimately in time Two, but it is certainly not the familiar time-One death. This we survive because our consciousness has never been contained within time One.

And it is quite beside the point to object that we have no visible evidence to prove that survival. Time Two, in which we do survive, does not work in the visible-evidence department. I cannot take that "aesthetic feeling," a time-Two experience, into a laboratory to be weighed and measured. The most meaningful and the most ecstatic moment I have ever known occurred in a dream, not pre-cognitive but deeply symbolic, a dream that changed my whole outlook; yet I have for it less visible evidence than I have for a slight cold-in the head or a broken fingernail.

Our time-Two world, in which we survive, has as its foundation our total experience in time One. Now it cannot be denied, for this has been proved over and over again, that the brain acts as a marvelous recording instrument, storing somehow and somewhere an exact impression of every moment of our lives, something quite different, in its brilliant immediacy, from what may be recovered by the ordinary memory. (Under hypnosis or the emotional pressure of drastic analysis, middle-aged men and women have been suddenly turned back into children of two, destructive and screaming with rage.) What the relations are between this stupendous brain storehouse and the mind or consciousness and the unconscious, I do not know, and I do not think anybody else knows.

And I am not denying that this endless recording, much of it inaccessible to our day-by-day consciousness and seemingly out of all proportion to our needs, may play a part, not yet understood, in our time-One existence.

But I believe with Dunne that when we have come to an end in time One, we go forward—spatially and geometrically, we may say, at a right angle—in time Two, no longer concentrating our attention on the physical world, but now having in place of it all that accumulation of mental events, all the sensations, feelings, thoughts, left to us from our time-One lives. It must be remembered, however, that we have never been living exclusively in time One, however much we may proclaim that no other time exists. So it might be as well for us hereafter, when we are out of passing time, that we do not think and feel and behave now as if passing time were all we had. And

surely this is what most religions, behind their popular melodramas of angels and demons, saviors and devils, heavens and hells, have been trying to teach us.

Because we have never been living exclusively in time One, we are not without clues—that is, if we do not willfully ignore them—as to what might happen when we are no longer in passing time. I have already given some examples of what we might call time-Two and time-Three effects, taken from my own experience. Now here is another. Can we imagine ourselves in a fifth dimension (time Two) obtaining a four-dimensional impression of a fellow creature? Alarmed by these dimensions, about to create a monster, we will probably reply at once that we cannot even imagine such an impression. But unless we have been unlucky in our relationships, I maintain that we are always taking what is in effect a four-dimensional view of the persons nearest and dearest to us. It is in fact impossible to avoid taking this view in a close, deep, and lasting relationship.

We do not see these loved persons entirely in passing time, as three-dimensional cross-sections of their real selves. We habitually see them, somewhat out of focus in passing time, in a curious blur that releases tenderness, not only as they are but also as they might be and as they were, reaching back, if we are parents, to their earliest childhood. The eagerness of lovers—and this is especially true of most women, usually more aware of this four-dimensional effect than most men—to know, to see, what the other was like years before they met, seems part of an instinctive desire to enjoy this deeper impression as soon as possible. It is an attempt, inspired by profound emotion, to reach beyond passing time, to fix the relationship in different and more enduring conditions of experience.

Then dreams, of course, offer us other clues as to what might happen when we are no longer in time One. This does not mean that dreams in general—and now we set apart those rare clear dreams—can be taken as examples of our time-Two existence. Allowance must be made, as Dunne pointed out, for the confusion between two times, two outlooks. When we no longer return to time One, the situation is altered. (But there is a Buddhist tradition that a man who can control his dreams while dreaming will control his states of being in the after life.) We shall have to learn how to live in time Two, which might well seem at first an uncontrollable dream world, through which our consciousness wanders like Alice on the other side of the looking glass. Because, as in dreams, we can no longer know certain time intensities, we shall miss the keenest sensual satisfactions but we shall also be beyond the reach of the sharpest pain. On the other hand, again as in dreams, what might be called our emotional landscape may be immensely enlarged and far more highly colored, mountains of wonder and joy rising above sinister depths and chasms of terror.

Any notion that wish fulfillment is at work here, sketching this time-Two and time-Three existence beyond time One in soft pastel shades, can be dismissed at once. We shall not sink into Abraham's or anybody else's bosom. We shall not be little lambs gently carried into the fold. The last flicker of our time-One consciousness will not cancel out for ever our follies and malignities, allowing us the sleep of the just when we have been so unjust. (Because so many people believe or hope it will, they no longer feel responsible.) It is here, in the world we have made, we really begin "to live with ourselves," and reap between these heavenly heights and hellish depths what we have sown. And we cannot say we have not been warned; we have been warned over and over and over again.

Anybody who can find wish fulfillment here must feel a great deal more complacent about his time-One life than I do about mine. I can see this time-Two existence, with time Three and its fiery creative energies now a new time Two, offering us some very rough going. Courage, imagination, and love, which we praise in a routine fashion more often than we really try to achieve, may be as urgently necessary as air and water and bread are now. So we might be well advised to stock up while we can. (It is what we were always told to do—that is, before we became members of an affluent super-technological society, giddy with conceit because we might put a man on the moon.)

There is, however, one feature of this time-Two afterlife that might seem to suggest a kind of professional wish fulfillment on my part. For I am by profession and temperament a dramatist, and I detest ill-contrived and under-rehearsed scenes. But my time-One life can show me—and indeed *will* show me when it turns into my time-Two world—far too many of such scenes. So I welcome the chance not of simply re-living them, though that may have to be done, but of *beginning to put them right*. For this I believe, quite apart from any professional and temperamental bias, we shall have an opportunity of doing, if we can work with others, whose lines cross ours in this time-Two world, in trust and love. We may have the choice—and this involves no intervention from higher levels of being; the choice could be entirely ours—between building a self-glorifying palace out of our time-One material, until we wall ourselves into a hell of loneliness and desolation, and trying to create in trust and love, at what we might call the crossroads of our respective world lines, a new and more rewarding life. We can begin to do this here and now. But we can do it better there, on the other side of that first but not last curtain of Time.

Even while we are on this side of that curtain, however, is there not always a something else that can never be fitted into the time-One pattern? I am not thinking now about precognitive dreams, premonitions, and the like, nor about the contemplative-aesthetic and the imaginative-creative experiences I described earlier. This something else is impossible to prove and is hard to capture in words. It can come

at high moments of love and though rarely, at a meeting of friends; it can transform some sudden glimpse of a landscape into an irradiated sign; it haunts some music for us; its light and its strange shadows fall on certain scenes in drama and fiction. Always it adds depth to life, suggests an ampler Time, opens a new dimension.

It never stays long, at least for most of us, but if, fixed in our attention to time One, we cease to be conscious of this something else, this bonus from the unknown, really arriving from another mode of Time, we begin to feel stale and weary. We are not only not preparing ourselves for existence in the next world, we are beginning to lose interest even in this one, for the scene is flat and its colors are fading. To die is not to close our eyes when we come to the end of our time One: it is to choose to live in too few dimensions.

6.

My personal belief, then, is that our lives are not contained within passing time, a single track along which we hurry to oblivion. We exist in more than one dimension of Time. Ourselves in times Two and Three cannot vanish into the grave; they are already beyond it even now. We may not be immortal beings—I do not think we are or should want to be—but we are something better than creatures carried on that single time track to the slaughter-house. We have a larger portion of Time—and more and stranger adventures with it—than conventional or positivist thought allows.

But it is still a portion; we have not unlimited Time, though what the limits will be in time Two and time Three, I do not know. Nor of course do I know what happens. I suspect, however, that in time Two we begin by being more essentially ourselves than in time One but end by being less ourselves, personality as we know it vanishing altogether in time Three.

We are not demigods and we are not cattle. We are more than our brains but not in the end, I feel, more than the consciousness those brains exist to serve. There is in me something greater and more enduring than anything in my time One experience. But outside or beyond that experience, not in time One, is something infinitely greater and more enduring than anything I can claim as mine. This I realized in that dream or vision of birds, which I described 25 years ago in *Rain Upon Godshill,* from which I shall quote it. The setting of the dream owed much to the fact that not long before, late at night, I had helped with some bird-ringing at the St. Catherine's lighthouse in the Isle of Wight:

> I dreamt I was standing at the top of a very high tower, alone., looking down upon myriads of birds all flying in one direction; every kind of bird was there, all the birds in the world. It was a noble sight, this vast aerial river of birds. But now in

> some mysterious fashion the gear was changed, and time speeded up, so that I saw generations of birds, watched them break their shells, flutter into life, weaken, falter, and die. Wings grew only to crumble; bodies were sleek and then, in a flash, bled and shriveled; and death struck everywhere at every second. What was the use of all this blind struggle towards life, this eager trying of wings, all this gigantic meaningless biological effort? As I stared down, seeming to see every creature's ignoble little history almost at a glance, I felt sick at heart. It would be better if not one of them, not one of us all, had been born, if the struggle ceased for ever. I stood on my tower, still alone, desperately unhappy. But now the gear was changed again and time went faster still, and it was rushing by at such a rate, that the birds could not show any movement but were like an enormous plain sown with feathers. But along this plain, flickering through the bodies themselves, there now passed a sort of white flame, trembling, dancing, then hurrying on; and as soon as I saw it I knew that this flame was life itself, the very quintessence of being; and then it came to me, in a rocket-burst of ecstasy, that nothing mattered, nothing could ever matter, because nothing else was real, but this quivering and hurrying lambency of being. Birds, men, or creatures not yet shaped and colored, all were of no account except so far as this flame of life travelled through them. It left nothing to mourn over behind it; what I had thought was tragedy was mere emptiness or a shadow show; for now all real feeling was caught and purified and danced on ecstatically with the white flame of life. I had never felt before such deep happiness as I knew at the end of my dream of the tower and the birds. . . .

And this white flame did not become visible, you may have noticed, until after the second speeding-up of all that bird life, in what could be described as *the third time*.

Readers of Jung will remember the importance he attaches to a process of development he calls "individuation," which, bringing a new relation to the unconscious, transforms the one-sided ego into the broadly-based "Self." (Incidentally, he found a similar process and transformation, expressed symbolically, in ancient Chinese thought.)

Now this must be rarely achieved, and only then, in most instances, toward the end of a longish life. What, then, is the point of it? Why struggle toward a goal overshadowed by the grave? Why at last understand how to live just when you are about to stop living?

Jung neither asked nor answered such questions. But now I believe that his "individuation" and achievement of the "Self" are a preparation for existence outside time One, in times Two and Three. Probably in time Two we move from personality to the essential self, never realized in time One; and that now, in time Two, sooner or later the self must take on, as it were, its final shape and coloring, extending itself to its limits, perhaps those belonging to one of a small number of equally essential types. We must become more completely ourselves before, in our existence only in time

Three, finally dissolving into selfless consciousness, as I appeared to do when ecstatically aware only of that white flame.

There is of course purpose in all this. I am not an atheist, but I cannot agree with men who talk about God as if He had once attended a Speech Day at their theological college. That hurrying, trembling, delicate, white flame was not God—but it was numinous. We might say it was moving to and from unimaginable creative Being, both away from and toward a blinding Absolute, possibly through the history of a thousand million planets. For whatever else this universe might be, it is obviously very large and extremely complicated. It must therefore contain innumerable levels of being, about which we know no more than a beetle does about the proceedings of the British Association. We men on earth are probably on a very low level, but we have our task like other and higher orders of beings. As far as I can see—and I claim no prophetic insight—that task is to bring consciousness to the life of earth—or, as Jung wrote in his old age, "to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being."

We cannot perform this service, just as we cannot even enjoy a good life, unless our minds and personalities are free to develop in their own fashion, outside the iron molds of totalitarian states and systems, narrow and authoritarian churches, and equally narrow and dogmatic scientific-positivist opinion. It happens that all three are bearing down on us now, so that while men have always lived in jeopardy, our present position is unusually precarious. We have now arrived at a complicated crossroads, where every turning but one—and that one the least obvious, no great roaring highway—will be disastrous.

I have written this book in the belief that the choice of the right turning, a decision that may be final if not for our whole species then at least for our civilization, cannot be separated from the relations between Man and Time.

The New Model of the Universe

P. D. Ouspensky

Excerpts on time from chapter 11

We may note once more, though it should be quite clear already, that three coordinates are not sufficient for the description of the universe, for such a universe would contain no motion, or, putting it differently, every observable motion would immediately destroy the universe.

The fourth coordinate takes time into consideration. Space is no longer taken separately. Four-dimensional space-time allows of motion.

But motion by itself is a very complex phenomenon. At the very first approach to motion we meet with an interesting fact. Motion
has in itself three clearly expressed dimensions: duration, velocity and "direction". But this direction does not lie in Euclidean space, as was assumed by old physics; it is a direction from before to after, which for us never changes and never disappears.

Time is the measure of motion. If we represent time by a line, then the only line which will satisfy all the demands of time will be a *spiral*. A spiral is a " three-dimensional line ", so to speak, that is, a line which requires three coordinates for its construction and designation.

The three-dimensionality of time is completely analogous to the three-dimensionality of space. We do not measure space by *cubes;* we measure it linearly in different directions, and we do exactly the same with time, although in time we can measure only two coordinates out of three, namely the duration and the velocity; the direction of time for us is not a quantity but an absolute condition. Another difference is that in regard to space we realise that we are dealing with a three-dimensional continuum, whereas in regard to time we do not realise it. But, as has been said already, if we attempt to unite the three coordinates of time into one whole, we shall obtain a spiral.

This explains at once why the " fourth coordinate " is insufficient to describe time. Although it is admitted to be a curved line, its curvature remains undefined. Only three coordinates, or the " three-dimensional line ", that is, the spiral, give an adequate description of time.

The three-dimensionality of time explains many phenomena which have hitherto remained incomprehensible, and makes unnecessary most of the elaborate hypotheses and suppositions which have been indispensable in the attempts to squeeze the universe into the boundaries of a three or even four-dimensional continuum.

This also explains the failure of relativism to give a comprehensible form to its explanations. Excessive complexity in any construction is always the result of something having been omitted or wrongly taken at the outset. The cause of the complexity in this case lies in the above-mentioned impossibility of squeezing the universe into the boundaries of a three-dimensional or four-dimensional continuum. If

we try to regard three-dimensional space as two-dimensional and to explain all physical phenomena as occurring on a surface, several further "principles of relativity" will be required.

The three dimensions of time can be regarded as the continuation of the dimensions of space, i.e. as the " fourth ", the " fifth " and the " sixth" dimensions of space. A " six-dimensional" space is undoubtedly a "Euclidean continuum", but of properties and forms totally incomprehensible to us. The six-dimensional form of a body is inconceivable for us, and if we were able to apprehend it with our senses we should undoubtedly see and feel it as three-dimensional. Three-dimensionality is a function of our senses. Time is the boundary of our senses. Six-dimensional space is reality, the world as it is. This reality we perceive only through the slit of our senses, touch and vision, and define as three-dimensional space, ascribing to it Euclidean properties. Every six-dimensional body becomes for us a three-dimensional body *existing in time,* and the properties of the fifth and the sixth dimensions remain for us imperceptible.

Six dimensions constitute a "period", beyond which there can be nothing except the repetition of the same period on a different scale. The period of dimensions is limited at one end by the point, and at the other end by infinity of space multiplied by infinity of time, which in ancient symbolism was represented by two intersecting triangles, or a six-pointed star.

Just as in space one dimension, a line, or two dimensions, a surface, cannot exist by themselves and when taken separately are nothing but imaginary figures, while the *solid* exists in reality, so in time only the three-dimensional *solid of time* exists in reality.

In spite of the fact that the counting of dimensions in geometry begins with the line, actually, in the real physical sense, only the material point and the solid are objects which exist. Lines and surfaces are merely features and properties of a solid. They can also be regarded in another way: a line as the path of the motion of a point in space, and a surface as the path of the motion of a line along the direction perpendicular to it (or its rotation).

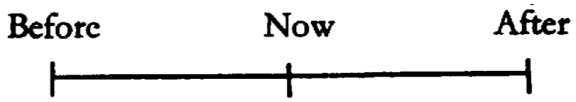
The same may be applied to the solid of time. In it only the point (the moment) and the solid are real. The *moment* can change, that is, it can contract and disappear or expand and become a solid. The *solid* also can contract and become a point, or can expand and become an infinity.

The number of dimensions can neither be infinite nor very great; it *cannot be more than six*. The reason for this lies in the property of the sixth dimension which includes in itself *All Possibilities* of the given scale.

In order to understand this it is necessary to examine the content of the three dimensions of time taken in their "space" sense, that is, as the fourth, the fifth and the sixth dimensions of space.

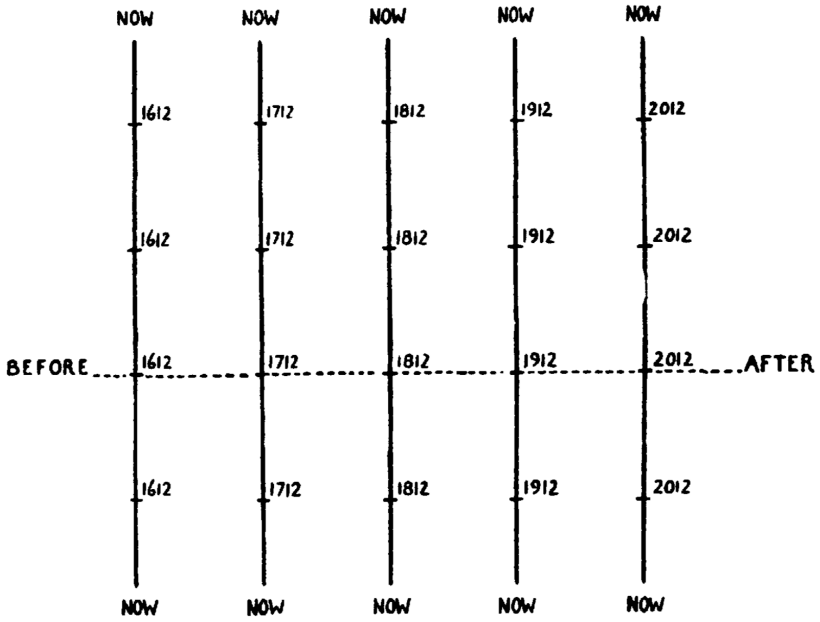
If we take a three-dimensional body as a point, the line of the existence or motion of this point will be a line of the fourth dimension.

Let us take the line of time as we usually conceive it.



The line determined by the three points “before”, “now”, “after”, is a line of the fourth dimension.

Let us imagine several lines perpendicular to this line, before-now-after. These lines, each of which designates *now* for a given moment, will express the perpetual existence of past and possibly of future moments.



Each of these perpendicular lines is the *perpetual now* for some moment, and every moment has such a line *of perpetual now.*

This is the fifth dimension.

The fifth dimension forms a surface in relation to the line of time.

Everything we know, everything we recognise as existing, lies on the line of the fourth dimension; the line of the fourth dimension is the “ historical time “ of our section of existence. This is the only “time” we know, the only time we feel, the only time we recognise. But though we are not aware of it, sensations of the existence of other “times”, both parallel and perpendicular, continually enter into our consciousness. These parallel “times” are completely analogous to our time and consist of before-now-after, whereas the perpendicular “times” consist only of now, and are, as it were, cross-threads, the *woof* in a fabric, in their relation to the parallel lines of time which in this case represent the *warp*.

But each moment of “now” on the line of time, that is, on one of the parallel lines, contains not one, but a certain number of possibilities, at times a great, at others a

small number. The number of possibilities contained in every moment must necessarily be limited, for if the number of possibilities were not limited, there would be no impossibilities. Thus each moment of time, within certain limited conditions of being or physical existence, contains a definite number of possibilities and an infinite number of impossibilities. But impossibilities can also be of different kinds. If, walking through a familiar rye-field, I suddenly saw a big birch tree which was not there yesterday, it would be an impossible phenomenon (precisely the "material miracle" which is not admitted by the principle of Aristotle). But if, walking through a rye-field, I saw in the middle of it a coconut palm, this would be an impossible phenomenon of a different kind, also a "material miracle", but of a much higher or more difficult order. This difference between impossibilities should be kept in mind.

On the table before me there are many different things. I may deal with these things in different ways. But I cannot, for instance, take from the table something that is not there. I cannot take from the table an orange that is not there, just as I cannot take from it the Pyramid of Kheops or St. Isaac's Cathedral. It looks as though there was actually no difference in this respect between an orange and a pyramid, and yet there is a difference. An orange *could be* on the table, but a pyramid *could not be*. However elementary all this is, it shows that there are different degrees of impossibility.

But at present we are concerned only with possibilities. As I have already mentioned, each moment contains a definite number of possibilities. I may actualise one of the existing possibilities, that is, I may do something. I may do nothing. But whatever I do, that is, whichever of the possibilities contained in the given moment is actualised, the actualisation of this possibility will determine *the following moment of time,* the following *now.* This second moment of time will again contain a certain number of possibilities, and the actualisation of one of these possibilities will determine *the following moment of time,* the following *now,* and so on.

Thus the line of the direction of time can be denned as the line of the actualisation of one possibility out of the number of possibilities which were contained in the preceding point.

The line of this actualisation will be the line of the fourth dimension, the line of time. We visualise it as a straight line, but it would be more correct to think of it as a zigzag line.

The perpetual existence of this actualisation, the line perpendicular to the line of time, will be the line of the fifth dimension, or the line of eternity.

For the modern mind eternity is an indefinite concept. In ordinary conversational language eternity is taken as a limitless extension of time. But religious and philosophical thought put into the concept of eternity ideas which distinguish it from mere infinite extension homogeneous with finite extension. This is most clearly seen in Indian philosophy with its idea of the *Eternal Now* as the state of Brahma.

In fact, the concept of eternity in relation to time is the same as the concept of a surface in relation to a line. A surface is a quantity incommensurable with a line.

Infinity for a line need not necessarily be a line without end; it may be a surface, that is an infinite number of finite lines.

Eternity can be an infinite number of finite "times". It is difficult for us to think of "time " in the plural. Our thought is too much accustomed to the idea of one time, and though in theory the idea of the plurality of "times" is already accepted by new physics, in practice we still think of time as one and the same always and everywhere.

What will the sixth dimension be? The sixth dimension will be the line of the actualisation of other possibilities which were contained in the preceding moment but were not actualised in "time". In every moment and at every point of the three-dimensional world there are a certain number of possibilities; in "time", that is, in the fourth dimension, one possibility is actualised every moment, and these actualised possibilities are laid out, one beside another, in the fifth dimension. The line of time, repeated infinitely in eternity, leaves at every point unactualised possibilities. But these possibilities, which have not been actualised in one time, are actualised in the sixth dimension, which is an aggregate of "all times". The lines of the fifth dimension, which run perpendicular to the line of "time", form as it were a surface. The lines of the sixth dimension, which start from every point of "time" in all possible directions, form the solid or three-dimensional continuum of time, of which we know only one dimension. We are one-dimensional beings in relation to time. Because of this we do not see parallel time or parallel times; for the same reason we do not see the angles and turns of time, but see time as a straight line.

Until now we have taken all the lines of the fourth, the fifth and the sixth dimensions as straight lines, as coordinates. But we must remember that these straight lines cannot be regarded as really existing. They are merely an imaginary system of coordinates for determining the spiral.

Generally speaking, it is impossible to establish and prove the real existence of straight lines beyond a certain definite scale and outside certain definite conditions. And even these " conditional straight lines " cease to be straight if we imagine them on a revolving body which possesses, besides, a whole series of other movements. This is quite clear as regards space lines: straight lines are nothing but imaginary coordinates which serve to measure the length, the breadth and the depth of spirals. But time lines are geometrically in no way different from space lines. The only difference lies in the fact that in space we know three dimensions and are able to establish the *spiral* character of all cosmic movements, that is, movements which we take on a sufficiently large scale. But we dare not do this as regards "time". We try to lay out the whole space of time on one line of the great time which is general for everybody and everything. But this is an illusion; general time does not exist, and each separately existing body, each separately existing "system" (or what is accepted as such), has its own time. This is recognised by new physics. But what it means and what a separate existence means is not explained by new physics.

Separate time is always a completed circle. We can think of time as a straight line only on the great straight line of the great time. If the great time does not exist, every separate time can only be a circle, that is, a closed curve. But a circle or any closed curve requires two coordinates for its definition. The circle (circumference) is a two-dimensional figure. If the second dimension of time is eternity, this means that eternity enters into every circle of time and into every moment of the circle of time. Eternity is the curvature of time. Eternity is also movement, an *eternal movement*. And if we imagine time as a circle or as any other closed curve, *eternity* will signify eternal movement along this curve, eternal repetition, eternal recurrence.

The fifth dimension is movement in the circle, repetition, recurrence. The sixth dimension is the way out of the circle. If we imagine that one end of the curve rises from the surface, we visualise the third dimension of time—the sixth dimension of space. The line of time becomes a spiral. But the spiral, of which I have spoken before, is only a very feeble approximation to the spiral of time, only its possible geometrical representation. The actual spiral of time is not analogous to any of the lines we know, for it branches off at every point. And as there can be many possibilities in every moment, so there can be many branches at every point. Our mind refuses not only to visualise, but even to think of the resulting figure in curved lines, and we should lose the direction of our thought in this impasse if *straight lines* did not come to our aid.

In this connection we can understand the meaning and purpose of the straight lines of the system of coordinates. Straight lines are not a naivete of Euclid, as non-Euclidean geometry and the " new physics " connected with it are trying to make out. Straight lines are a concession to the weakness of our thinking apparatus, a concession thanks to which we are able to think of reality in approximate forms.

A figure of three-dimensional time will appear to us in the form of a complicated structure consisting of radii diverging from every moment of time, each of them bearing within it its own time and throwing out new radii at every point. Taken together these radii will form the three-dimensional continuum of time.

We live and think and exist on one of the lines of time. But the second and third dimensions of time, that is, the surface on which this line lies and the solid in which this surface is included, enter every moment into our life and into our consciousness, and influence our "time". When we begin to feel the three dimensions of time we call them direction, duration and velocity. But if we wish to understand the true interrelation of things even approximately, we must bear in mind the fact that direction, duration and velocity are not real dimensions, but merely the reflections of the real dimensions in our consciousness.

In thinking of the *time solid* formed by the lines of all the possibilities included in each moment, we must remember that beyond these there can be nothing.

This is the point at which we can understand the *limitedness of the infinite universe,*

As has been said before, the three dimensions of space plus the zero dimension and plus the three dimensions of time form the *period of dimensions*. It is necessary to understand the properties of this period. It includes both space and time. The period of dimensions may be taken as *space-time,* that is, the space of six dimensions or the space of the actualisation of all possibilities. Outside this space we can think only of repetitions of the period of dimensions either on the scale of zero or on the scale of infinity. But these are different spaces, which have nothing in common with the space of six dimensions and may or may not exist, without changing anything in the space of six dimensions.

The counting of dimensions in geometry begins with the line, the first dimension, and in a certain sense this is right. But both space and time have yet another, the *zero dimension*—the point or the moment. And it must be understood that any space solid, up to the *infinite sphere* of old physics, is *a point* or a *moment* when taken in time.

The zero dimension, the first, the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth and the sixth dimensions form the period of dimensions. But a "figure" of the zero dimension, a point, is *a solid of another scale*. A figure of the first dimension, a line, is infinity in relation to a point. For itself a line is a solid, but a solid of another scale than a point. For a surface, that is, for a figure of two dimensions, a line is a *point*. A surface is three-dimensional for itself, whereas for a solid it becomes a point, and so on. A line and a surface are for us only geometrical concepts, and it is incomprehensible at the first glance how they can be three-dimensional bodies for themselves. But it becomes more comprehensible if we begin with the solid which represents a really existent physical body. We know that a body is three-dimensional for itself as well as for other three-dimensional bodies of a scale near its own. It is also infinity for a surface, which is *zero* in relation to it, because no number of surfaces will make a solid. And the solid is also a point, a zero, a figure of the zero dimension, for the fourth dimension, first, because, however big it may be, a solid is a point, that is, a moment for time, and, second, because no number of solids will make time. The whole of three-dimensional space is but a moment in time. It should be understood that "lines" and "surfaces" are only names which we give to dimensions which for us lie between the point and the solid. They have no real existence for us. Our universe consists only of points and solids. A point is zero dimension, a solid is three dimensions. On another scale a solid must be taken as a time point, and on yet another scale again as a solid, but as a solid of three dimensions *of time*.

In such a simplified universe there would be no time and no motion. Time and motion are created precisely by these *incompletely perceived solids,* that is, by space and time lines and space and time surfaces. And the period of dimensions of the real universe actually consists of *seven powers of solids* (a power is of course only a name in this case). (1) A point,—the hidden solid. (2) A line,—the solid of the second power. (3) A surface,—the solid of the third power. (4) A body or
a solid,—the solid of the fourth power. (5) Time, or the existence of a body or a solid in time,—the solid of the fifth power. (6) Eternity, or the existence of time,—the solid

of the sixth power. (7) That for which we have no name, the "six-pointed star", or the existence of eternity,—the solid of the seventh power.

Further it should be observed that dimensions are movable, i.e. any three consecutive dimensions form either "time" or "space", and the "period" can move upwards and downwards when one degree is added above and one is taken away from below or when one degree is added below and one is taken away from above. Thus, if one dimension from "below" is added to the six dimensions we possess, then one dimension from " above " must disappear. The difficulty of understanding this eternally changing universe, which contracts and expands according to the *size of the observer* and the speed of his perception, is counterbalanced by the constancy of laws and relative positions in these changing conditions.

The " seventh dimension " is impossible, for it would be a line leading nowhere, running in a non-existent direction.

The line of impossibilities is the line of the seventh, the eighth and the other non-existent dimensions, a line which leads nowhere and comes from nowhere. No matter what strange universe we may imagine, we can never admit the real existence of a solar system in which the moon is made of green cheese. In the same way, whatever strange scientific manipulations we may think of, we cannot imagine that Prof. Einstein would really erect a pole on the Potsdamer Platz in order to measure the distance between the earth and the clouds, as he threatens to do in his book.

One could find many such examples. The whole of our life actually consists of phenomena of the "seventh dimension", that is, of phenomena of fictitious possibility, fictitious importance and fictitious value. We live in the seventh dimension and cannot escape from it. And our model of the universe can never be complete if we do not realise the place occupied in it by the "seventh dimension". But it is very difficult to realise this. We never even come near to understanding how many *non-existent* things play a role in our life, govern our fate and our actions. But again, as has been said before, even the non-existent and the impossible can be of different degrees— and therefore it is perfectly justifiable to speak not of the seventh dimension, but generally *of imaginary dimensions,* the number of which is also imaginary.